June

25 Cents

AMAZING STORIES

HUGO GERNSBACK
EDITOR

Stories by
H.G. WELLS
A. MERRITT
CYRIL G. WATES

EXPERIMENTER PUBLISHING COMPANY, NEW YORK, PUBLISHERS OF
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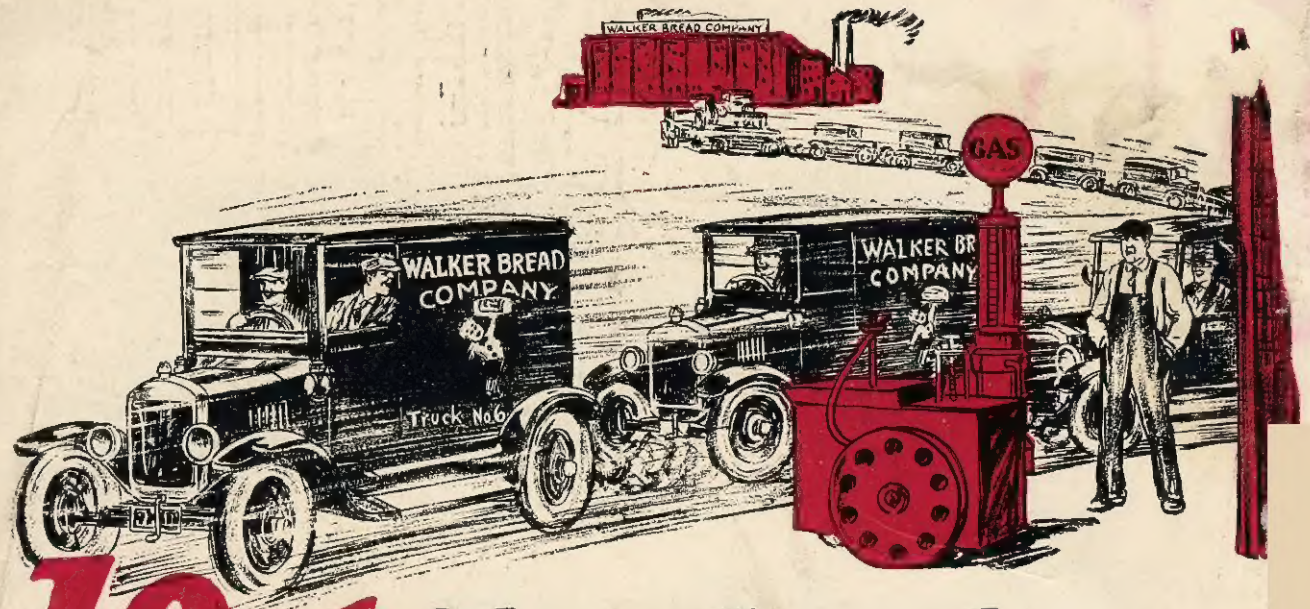

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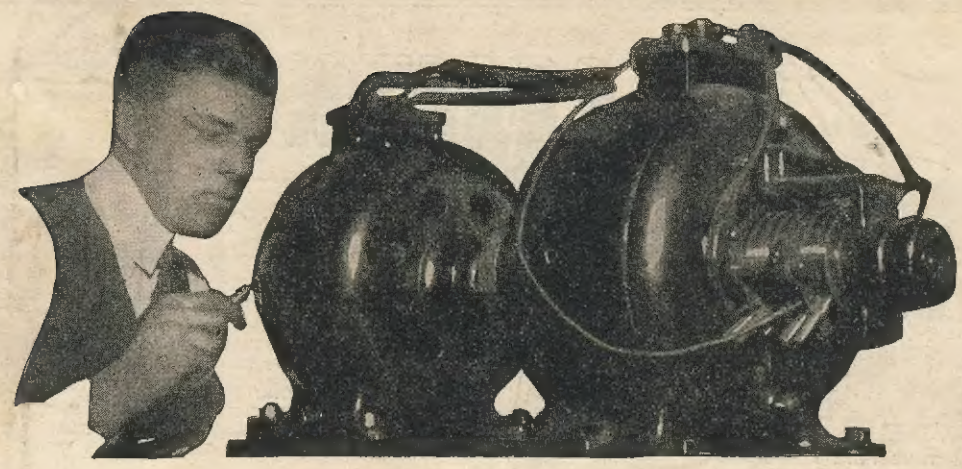

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AMAZING STORIES

Vol. 2 No. 3
June, 1927

EDITORIAL & GENERAL OFFICES: 230 Fifth Ave., New York City
Published by Experimenter Publishing Company, Inc.

(H. Gernsback, Pres.; S. Gernsback, Treas.; R. W. DeMott, Sec'y
Publishers of SCIENCE & INVENTION, RADIO NEWS,
AMAZING STORIES, RADIO REVIEW, RADIO INTERNACIONAL
Owners of Broadcast Station WRNY.

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Our Cover

this month illustrates a scene from "The Moon Pool," by A. Merritt, in which Larry, the American-Irishman, proves his true friendship and heroism, when, with automatic poised, he steps between Olaf and The Shining One, just as that sinister thing is about to grasp the Norseman with its shining tentacle.

In Our Next Issue:

THE ETHER SHIP OF OLTOR, by S. Maxwell Coder, the first honorable mention cover contest story, which deals with Venus and a war there. A fine, spontaneous and original story, and it follows the illustration conscientiously.

THE VOICE FROM THE INNER WORLD, by A. Hyatt Verrill. This story has won second honorable mention and the writer, who is by this time well known to our readers, treats these strange people as ferocious female cannibals—making it a somewhat gruesome narrative.

THE LOST CONTINENT, by Cecil B. White. Third honorable mention story. Some thoughts on the fourth-dimension and a trip centuries back in time are very cleverly worked into the subject of the illustration. A clever, original story, well told.

THE GRAVITOMOBILE, by D. B. McRae, awarded the fourth honorable mention, again treats the subject of the illustration in a quite individual manner. It starts in Mexico, goes to Mars, and ends —well, very unexpectedly.

THE SHADOW OF THE SPARK, by Edward S. Sears. To possess perfect health and a robust physique, does not mean that death from shock is impossible. On the other hand, if such a person dies, apparently from the effect of an operation for the amputation of a leg, some suspicion as to the real cause of his death is justifiable. Our new author weaves his science through this unusual murder story in a thoroughly ingenious manner.

THE MOON POOL, by A. Merritt (Conclusion). The third and final instalment carries you into the realms of the mysterious Three and the Silent One. The author very ingeniously depicts a war, effectively fought, between the two underground factions, with weapons entirely new and astounding. The story becomes more and more exciting and interesting chapter by chapter.

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AMAZING STORIES is published on the 5th of each preceding month. There are 12 numbers per year. Subscription price is $2.50 a year in U. S. and possessions. Canada and foreign countries $3.00 a year. U. S. coin as well as U. S. stamps accepted (no foreign coin or stamps) Single copies, 25 cents each.
All communications and contributions to this journal should be addressed to Editor AMAZING STORIES, 230 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. Unaccepted contributions cannot be returned unless full postage has been included. ALL accepted contributions are paid for on publication.

AMAZING STORIES. Monthly. Entered as second class matter March 1926, by the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 1879. Title Registered U. S. Patent Office.

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AMAZING STORIES is for sale at all newsstands in United States and Canada. European Agents, S. J. Wise Et Cie, 40 Pla Verte, Antwerp, Belgium. Printed in U. S. A.

General Advertising Dept., 230 Fifth Avenue, New York City.
ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES

L. F. McCLURE, 720 Cass Street, Chicago, Ill.
DAVIES, DILLON & KELLY, 15 West 10th St., Kansas City, Mo.
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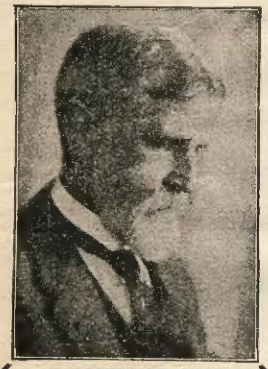


T. O'CONOR SLOANE, A.B., A.M., LL.D., Ph.D.

Noted Instructor, Lecturer and Author. Formerly Treasurer American Chemical Society and a practical chemist with many well known achievements to his credit. Not only has Dr. Sloane taught chemistry for years but he was for many years engaged in commercial chemistry work.

Do you remember how the tales of pirate gold used to fire your imagination and make you want to sail the uncharted seas in search of treasure and adventure? And then you would regret that such things were no longer done. But that is a mistake. They *are* done—today and everyday—not on desert islands, but in the chemical laboratories throughout your own country. Quietly, systematically, the chemist works. His work is difficult, but more adventurous than the blood-curdling deeds of the Spanish Main. Instead of meeting an early and violent death on some forgotten shore, he gathers wealth and honor through his invaluable contributions to humanity. Alfred Nobel, the Swedish chemist who invented dynamite, made so many millions that the income alone from his bequests provides five $40,000 prizes every year for the advancement of science and peace. C. M. Hall, the chemist who discovered how to manufacture aluminum made millions through this discovery. F. G. Cottrell, who devised a valuable process for recovering the waste from flue gases, James Gayley, who showed how to save enormous losses in steel manufacture, L. H. Baekeland, who invented Bakelite—these are only a few of the men to whom fortunes have come through their chemical achievements.

What Some of Our Students Say of This Course:

I have not written since I received the big set. I can still say that it far exceeded my anticipations. Since I have been studying with your school I have been appointed chemist for the Scranton Coal Co. testing all the coal and ash by proximate analysis. The lessons are helping me wonderfully, and the interesting way in which they are written makes me wait patiently for each lesson.—MORLAIS COUZENS.

I wish to express my appreciation of your prompt reply to my letter and to the recommendation to the General Electric Co. I intend to start the student engineering course at the works. This is somewhat along electrical lines, but the fact that I had a recommendation from a reliable school no doubt had considerable influence in helping me to secure the job.—H. VAN BENTHUYSEN.

So far I've been more than pleased with your course and am still doing nicely. I hope to be your honor graduate this year.—J. M. NORKUS, JR.

I find your course excellent and your instruction, truthfully, the clearest and best assembled I have ever taken, and yours is the fifth one I've studied.—JAMES J. KELLY.

From the time I was having Chemistry it has never been thus explained to me as it is now. I am recommending you highly to my friends, and urging them to become members of such an organization.—CHARLES BENJAMIN.

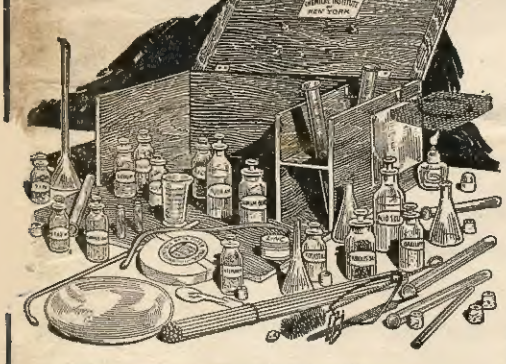
I shall always recommend your school to my friends and let them know how simple your lessons are.—C. J. AMDAHL.

I am more than pleased. You dig right in from the start. I am going to get somewhere with this course. I am so glad that I found you.—A. A. CAMERON.

I use your lessons constantly as I find it more thorough than most text books I can secure.—WM. H. TIBBS.

Thanking you for your lessons, which I find not only clear and concise, but wonderfully interesting. I am—ROBT. H. TRAYLOR.

I received employment in the Consolidated Gas. Co. I appreciate very much the good service of the school when a recommendation was asked for.—JOS. DECKER.



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A.S. June, '27.

JEAN

The One-Way Road

"The Road to Hell"—that's what the good folk of San Diego, California, call the seventeen miles of excellent pavement leading to Tia Juana, Mexico. And those who go there are branded in the eyes of the town. Jean went regularly, for she was a "Tia Juana debutante," as the girls who dance in the carbarets there are called. She thought she could escape paying the penalty of such a life. But she reckoned without . . . love . . . Her own intensely human and heart-throbbing story—a story you'll never forget—appears in the current issue of MODERN STORY MAGAZINE, on sale at most newsstands.

BURT

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A Few of the Stories Appearing in the Current Issue

Must Girls Also Have Their Fling?

You've heard it often said that "boys must have their fling," before settling down to the more serious things of life. Is this modern girl now demanding the same privileges that her brother has?

They Said I Was Bound to Lose

Because she was pretty and soft-curved, because her eyes were dreamy and her mouth full and generous, she was told she could not win out in the big City of Temptation. Of course, she laughed . . . in the beginning. . .

Modernisms—Wise Sayings of Modern Youth

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MODERN STORY MAGAZINE

423 West 55th Street

New York City

VOLUME 2

AMAZING STORIES

THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENTIFICTION

JUNE, 1927
No. 3

HUGO GERNSBACK, *Editor*
DR. T. O'CONOR SLOANE, Ph.D.; *Associate Editor*
WILBUR C. WHITEHEAD, *Literary Editor*
C. A. BRANDT, *Literary Editor*

Editorial and General Offices: 230 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Extravagant Fiction Today - - - - - - - - Cold Fact Tomorrow

THE $500 COVER PRIZE CONTEST

By HUGO GERNSBACK

IN finally announcing the prize winners in the $500 Prize Contest, an interesting chapter in the young life of "AMAZING STORIES" has been brought to a successful close. To those of our readers who have not seen or heard about this prize contest, let us briefly state that, on our December, 1926, cover a picture was shown, around which a story of not more than 10,000 words was to be written. The picture was purely fanciful and you will find it reproduced herewith. Not only was it highly fanciful, but fantastic as well, and our readers were asked to base upon it a suitable story that would be not only plausible but possible. The story was to be of the scientifiction type, and was to contain correct scientific facts to make it appear plausible and within the realm of present-day knowledge of science.

The contest may be said to have been a very successful one. Some 360 stories were actually received by the editors and our readers may rest assured that it was not a simple matter to come to a decision, because many worthwhile stories were submitted. There were to be three prizes, totaling $500, as follows: First Prize, $250. Second Prize, $150. Third Prize, $100. The prize winning stories were:

First Prize, "The Visita[illegible]" by Cyril G. Wates, 9453-100a Ave., Edmonton, Alta, Canada.

Second Prize, "The Electronic Wall," by Geo. R. Fox, Three Oaks, Michigan.

Third Prize, "The Fate of the Poseidonia," by Mrs. F. C. Harris, 1652 Lincoln Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio.

The three stories mentioned above are printed complete in this issue, while four further ones, which were awarded honorable mention, will be published in future issues. The four stories which were awarded honorable mention were the following:

First Honorable Mention—"The Ether Ship of Oltor," by S. Maxwell Coder, 6926 Paschall Ave., Philadelphia, Pa.

Second Honorable Mention—"The Voice from the Inner World," by A. Hyatt Verrill, Box 118, Station "W", New York City.

Third Honorable Mention—"The Lost Continent," by Cecil B. White, 1949 Crescent Road, Foul Bay, Victoria, B. C., Canada.

Fourth Honorable Mention—"The Gravitomobile," by D. B. McRae, 392 "E" Street, San Bernardino, California.

You might think that seven stories inspired by the same picture would of necessity be alike. We were very much astonished to find that such was not the case, and you will be delighted, as were the editors, to find the wide divergence of interest in the seven stories. They certainly could not be more totally unlike if we had specified that as one of the prize-winning requirements.

Of course in each story there is the suspended ship and the ball-like space flyer, but that is about all they have in common. Furthermore, the treatment in each case is different for no two authors treated even this subject alike. In the three stories you will find not only good fiction, that keeps your interest, but good science as well. You will find that the authors have given careful thought to the smallest details and particularly to the vital scientific parts.

We are certain that you will hear more from the prize-winning authors. All of them have the makings of future scientifiction writers.

We would also like very much to have our readers' comments on the prize-winning stories, and the editors would like to know if they, as judges would have awarded the prizes in the order given. For that reason we have changed the voting coupon for this month to take care of this phase.

Of course the prizes will be paid as announced here, but if the readers should vote differently, their findings will be given in an early issue of "AMAZING STORIES."

Mr. Hugo Gernsback speaks every Monday at 9 P. M. from WRNY on various scientific and radio subjects.

The VISITATION

By Cyril G. Wates

Next instant, I seemed to be falling. All sense of material existence vanished, and in a whirl of confusion I seemed to be floating in space. Then I felt the reassuring clasp of Rethmar's hand and gradually I regained my composure, only to find to my astonishment that instead of resting on the bottom of the Zeeth, I was actually poised in space at the centre of the globe, without visible means of support.

First Prize Winner in the $500 Prize Cover Contest

First prize of $250.00 awarded to Cyril G. Wates, 9453-100a Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, for *"The Visitation."*

THE VISITATION

By CYRIL G. WATES

Foreword

THIS is the narrative of the last voyage of the S.S. *Shah of Iran*, to which voyage the greatest transformation the world has ever witnessed, was directly due—the voyage which resulted in that epoch-making year, universally known as "The Year of the Visitation."

Who I, the writer, may be, is of little importance and yet my name is not entirely unfamiliar to the countless millions who will read this story and will rejoice that the silence of nearly ninety years has at last been broken and all the world may know the events which took place on that extraordinary voyage—events which have hitherto been wrapped in mystery—at the request of those strange beings who called themselves "The Deelathon," but who are better known to us today as "The Visitants."

I am Benedict Clinton and I am the great-grandson of Charles Clinton, who was Captain of the *Shah of Iran*. Captain Clinton, my great-grandfather, died yesterday at the age of nearly one hundred and twenty-six years, and his death unseals my lips and releases me from the promise I made to him, a year ago, on his birthday.

Although, as I have stated, my own personality is of no importance in this narrative, it affords me a certain amused satisfaction to realize that I am perhaps the last historian of the human race. Owing to the changed conditions under which we live, the professional historian has become almost as obsolete as the lawyer or the alchemist of past ages. There is an old saying that "Happy is the nation which has no history," and that proverb is as true today as in the past, except that for the word "nation" we must substitute "planet." History is rightly defined as the record of the sufferings of mankind. Without suffering, there is nothing deemed worthy of record.

During the past century the world has been passing through the most extraordinary phase of transition which ever has been, or ever will be known. Prior to the year 1950—the Year of the Visitation—Humanity was divided by innumerable lines, largely artificial, into hundreds of races and nations. Since that date man has known only two divisions; those who were living at the time of the Visitation and those who were born afterwards.

We have adopted the two Deelathon words, "Zykof" and "Epzykof" (immortal and mortal), in referring to these two subdivisions of mankind and the names convey a fairly clear picture of human society of today. We of the new generation, the Zykofs, having been born to a knowledge of the Thon, glory in the prospect of a life which, while certainly not eternal, is infinitely richer and happier and more extended than that which our forefathers knew, but sometimes we are saddened by the sight of those who are nearest and dearest to us growing older and dying before our very eyes. Our friends the Epzykofs, who saw the great events which transpired nearly a century ago and even, as in my great-grandfather's case, were directly responsible for bringing about the Visitation, have only an acquired and not an inborn knowledge of the Thon and therefore are not fated to share with us, for long, the innumerable benefits it brings.

A year ago today I left my little workshop in the palm groves of Florida, where I carve and decorate the polar bosses for pleasure Zeeths, and before evening I set foot on the pine-clad shores of Vancouver Island. I had come, with many of my relatives and friends, to pay honor to Captain Clinton on his one hundred and twenty-fifth birthday. From all parts of the world we came and as I alighted from my Zeeth, I was greeted by several old friends who had just arrived from Japan.

Together we walked up the winding pathway through the forest, until we saw the gleam of white marble and emerged upon a wide lawn, upon the farther side of which, half hidden in a group of graceful cedar trees, was Capt. Clinton's home, with its fluted columns and ellipsoidal roof. The Captain was seated upon the steps, his white hair shining like a beacon light in the last rays of the setting sun, and gathered around him was a group of our relatives in animated conversation.

As we approached, Captain Clinton rose and came forward to greet us, his fine figure still erect and his eyes bright with youth in spite of his (for

IN introducing the new author of the prize story of our cover contest, we believe you will agree with us that Mr. Wates not only knows how to write interestingly and convincingly, but he also keeps your interest from beginning to end. Nor does he allow you to guess what it is all about until the end. Selected from over 300 stories, you may be sure that it must be good. The Board of Judges have awarded the first prize to a previously unknown author. The story not only is good fiction, but contains excellent science. We predict that we shall hear more from Mr. Wates. He seems to have the knack, that only a few people have, for writing scientifiction.

an Epzykof) great age. For each he had a word of welcome, but it seemed that his handclasp to me was especially cordial.

"I am glad, very glad that you have come, Benedict," he said heartily. "I have a task for you to perform, a very important task, not without its responsibilities, and I hope that you will not refuse the request of an old man."

"That is a hope which will be realized as soon as your request is made known," I replied. "As for the responsibility involved, the fact that you have selected me, when all mankind delights to serve you, will give me strength to perform whatever task you set me."

"Thank you, Benedict," answered the Captain, simply, and turning to the others, he said, "In this happy world, where perfect candor is universal, I have the doubtful honor of being the only man with a secret. As you all know, I am the last survivor of the crew of the *Shah of Iran* and soon I shall go to join my shipmates. Tomorrow I will tell Benedict the story of my last voyage, a story which was to be kept secret until the last of us had sailed for the home port. When I am gone, Benedict will write it out for all the world to read."

We surrounded him with loving words and tender caresses. Not because he was the most famous man in the world for nearly a hundred years, but because of his simple nobility, we loved this fine old sea captain of a past age. Thelma, his eldest daughter, who with her companion, John Adair, had come from their home in Spain that day, slipped her arm around her father's neck and cried:

"You must not leave us yet, Father dear! You have a hundred years of life in that big body of yours still. I believe you can beat me in a swimming match even now!" For Thelma was a famous swimmer.

"That remains to be proven, my dear," said the Captain with a little laugh, half gay, half sad.

"Prove it! Prove it, Thelma!" we cried and soon we were all running down the path to the shore, where we plunged into the warm waters of the Pacific.

Thelma beat her father by a length, her white body flashing through the water like an ivory Zeeth cleaving the air. We remained sporting in the bay until the daylight died and the big moon rose.

As we loitered up the hill, my great-grandfather drew me back from the gay crowd.

"I should like you to climb the Shah with me in the morning, Benedict," he said. "I want to watch the sun rise—who knows, it may be for the last time—and then I will tell you the story of my last voyage and the Visitation of the Deelathon. Will you come?"

The half light of dawn was just touching the snow-capped peaks in the east when Capt. Clinton and I started our ascent of the Shah, the little mountain just behind his home, to which he had attached the name of his old ship. We tiptoed down the steps in order not to disturb the sleeping guests, whose white forms lay—

"Star-scattered on the grass"

—as old Omar puts it. Soon we were high up among the rocky buttresses of the Shah. An hour of exhilarating climbing brought us to the summit and we sat on a flat boulder to watch the ever-new miracle of the Dawn.

To the East shone the placid waters of Queen Charlotte Sound, sparkling like molten gold in the radiance of the rising sun. Beyond towered the mountains of the mainland, lifting their snowy heads above their mantle of green. To the West, the waters of the Pacific widened to an unbroken horizon.

At last the Captain broke the silence and for an hour I sat spellbound, listening to his deep voice telling the story of that last voyage—the Voyage of the Visitation.

CHAPTER I

The Meteor

YOU must often have wondered (said Capt. Clinton) in common with the rest of the world, why no person among the crew or passengers of the *Shah of Iran* has ever revealed what took place on the last voyage of the old ship. The reason for this secrecy on the subject which is naturally of more than average interest to everyone, is quite simple.

When the Deelathon conceded to our request to make the Visitation, it was upon the express understanding that the location of their country should be concealed. They pointed out to us that it was impossible to foresee the outcome of the Visitation and they wanted to insure their own safety in any event.

This request was so entirely reasonable that we all unhesitatingly agreed to it. We realized that it was not possible to release into the world a tremendous force like the Thon, without producing a widespread upheaval, which might be beneficent or the reverse. We decided that the simplest way of preserving the secret was to make a pact among ourselves that the entire story of the voyage should remain untold until the last of us was dead. If it seemed wise, in the light of events which were still in the future, the last living member of the party was to tell the story to some dear friend, who would publish it after his death.

This, then, Benedict (continued the Captain), is the task I am asking you to undertake. Say nothing until I am gone and then publish what I am about to tell you, word for word as I shall tell it, as you may easily do by the aid of the Thon. I feel that my end is not far off. All possibility of danger to our friends and benefactors, the Deelathon, has long passed away and the necessity for preserving their secret no longer exists. And now for my story!

The *Shah of Iran*, of which I was Captain, was one of a line of huge steamers which made the journey between Vancouver and Australia in the fifth decade of the twentieth century. These great vessels, which became obsolete with the introduction of the Zeeth, were magnificently equipped according to the strange standards of that time and were so powerful that, although they floated upon the surface of the water, they had little to fear from the worst storms they were likely to encounter. They carried a thousand passengers and a large crew,

not only to handle the elaborate machinery and to navigate the vessel, but also to attend to the thousand and one wants of the thousand passengers!

On the seventeenth day of September, 1949, we sailed from Vancouver on a pleasure tour for which the *Shah of Iran* had been chartered. We were to touch at San Francisco, Manzanillo and Panama before striking across the Pacific for Sidney. The voyage was uneventful until we left the Isthmus and were three days' journey southwest of the Galapagos Islands. I was standing on the bridge with my chief officer, a fine fellow named Ian McFane, you knew him, Benedict.

The sun was rising. Ian and I were discussing some matter relating to the navigation of the ship, when a sailor came running up the steps and, touching his cap, as was the custom in those days, exclaimed:

"Beg pardon, Sir! There's something wrong with the sun!"

Ian McFane and I both looked to the East and both cried out in astonishment. Exactly in the centre of the golden disc was a round spot. This spot was perfectly black and about one-quarter the apparent diameter of the sun.

"What do you make of that, Mr. McFane?" I asked.

"Well, I hardly know, sir," replied the mate. "It's too big and black to be a sun-spot and, besides, it's moving!"

Sure enough, as we watched the spot, it crept slowly to the edge of the sun and in about ten minutes had left the disc altogether and vanished.

"It is some opaque object between us and the sun," I said.

"Some new kind of plane, maybe," suggested Ian.

"I doubt it, Mister," I replied. "It simply vanished when it left the solar disc and that would show that it's outside the atmosphere. More likely a big meteorite."

"If that was a meteorite and it hits the earth, we're going to know it!" said Ian.

"Well, don't start that idea circulating among the passengers," I replied. "We don't want a small sized panic on our hands and, anyway, we may be entirely wrong in supposing that it was a meteorite."

My warning proved to be useless, for when I descended to the promenade deck, I found many of the passengers gathered in groups, discussing the strange phenomenon, which had been seen by several early risers.

The news of the curious black spot on the sun spread like wild-fire and as soon as I made my appearance I was surrounded by a group of passengers, clamoring for an explanation.

"I'm sorry, ladies and gentlemen," I said, "but I am as much at a loss to explain the spot as yourselves. I can only suggest that it may have been a small, very dense cloud."

"But that wouldn't explain why it vanished when it passed off the face of the sun," objected one of the ladies. "Oh! here comes Professor Smithton! He'll be able to tell us all about it," and the group broke away from me and re-formed around the famous astronomer and physicist, who had just arrived on deck.

OF course, I knew that my theory of a dense cloud was ridiculous, but I was anxious to avoid any suggestion that might cause alarm among the passengers. A panic is a nasty thing to handle and would have reflected seriously upon my management and indirectly upon the shipping company.

I walked across the deck in time to hear the Professor giving his opinion in his best lecture-room style. He had not seen the spot himself, so he was obliged to base his judgment upon the descriptions of the few who had been on deck at the time. He listened to all carefully and then said, laughing:

"I have no doubt that this spot on the sun seems very mysterious to all of you, even you, Captain, but the explanation is, after all, extremely simple."

There was a murmur of surprise followed by demands for enlightenment.

"The spot you saw was simply a parachute descending from an aeroplane flying at a height so great that it was invisible. The spot was oval rather than round, was it not?"

Again there was a babble of voices, some saying that the spot was distinctly oval, others that it was quite round. When there was silence, the Professor continued, apparently quite deaf to any evidence that did not fit in with his preconceived theory.

"Ah! Quite so! Distinctively oval," he said. "Due to the angle of vision, of course," and rubbing his hands together with the air of a man who has cleared away all possible doubt, he disappeared into the saloon and was soon engrossed in a hearty breakfast, an excellent example which all the passengers followed.

"So that's that!" remarked Ian, who had come up during the discourse.

"Yes," I replied, dryly, "at least it would be if it had been a parachute! Fortunately for the professor's reputation for scientific infallibility, no one except ourselves seems to have noticed that the spot left the sun at its upper edge. If anyone has invented a rising parachute, I haven't heard of it!"

Throughout the day, the *Shah of Iran* continued to plough her way southward through an ocean as smooth as the proverbial sheet of glass. The weather was perfect, although the heat was oppressive, but that was to be expected during a calm just south of the equator.

In the late afternoon a slight swell manifested itself, getting gradually heavier until at sunset the steamer was perceptibly pitching, in spite of her gyroscopic stabilizers. The air was still motionless, the only breeze being due to the speed of the vessel, and the sky was absolutely cloudless.

I went to my cabin early and turned in, but could not sleep. An oppressive sense of impending disaster descended upon me like a pall, and resisted all my efforts to shake it off. At last I rose and dressed. I went out on the bridge, where I found Ian McFane talking to the officer of the watch, Gordon Caswell, the third mate. Both were looking up at the sky, where the stars were sparkling with tropical brilliancy.

"I'm glad you came out, sir," said Ian, "but what is the trouble?"

"I couldn't sleep," I exclaimed. "The heat, I guess."

"It sure is hot, even for the tropics," said Caswell.

"What are you two looking at?" I queried.

"There's something funny about the stars," replied Caswell and he pointed up towards the West.

Following the direction of his finger, I saw the Galaxy or Milky Way, as it is commonly called, shining like a belt of silver spray across the velvety sky. About fifty degrees above the horizon appeared a perfectly circular patch approximately three times the diameter of the moon. Within this area, the stars of the Galaxy were blotted out, giving exactly the appearance of the Coal Sack, that curious vacant space which has been familiar to astronomers for centuries.

"What do you think it is, sir?" asked Ian. "The spot we saw this morning?"

"It looks unpleasantly like it," I said, "and it also looks as though my theory of a huge meteorite or a wandering asteroid were correct."

"If so, it must be moving with tremendous speed," said Caswell. "It has doubled in size during the half hour that Mr. McFane and I have been watching it."

"I don't like the looks of it!" I said. "If that thing hits the sea anywhere near the boat, there's going to be one gosh-awful explosion! Mr. McFane, will you kindly have all hands called on deck. And quietly, please. Tell the Chief Steward to post men in all doorways and corridors to keep the passengers below decks in case of accident. Tell them to use tact and avoid a panic at all costs."

In ten minutes my orders had been carried out and the entire crew were standing by, waiting for —we knew not what!

The swell of the afternoon had increased rapidly to huge proportions, but the waves were so long and unbroken that the *Shah* rode them with ease. McFane, Caswell and I stood on the bridge watching that ominous disc in the sky spreading until it had blotted out fully one-eighth of the stars in the southwestern quadrant.

Suddenly the edges of the black circle were surrounded by an awful halo of flame. Far quicker than I can describe it the whole surface of the meteor, if that was what it was, had turned to a white heat, so intense that we were blinded by the glare. As the visitor from interstellar space tore its furious way through the hundred miles of our atmosphere, the whole expanse of ocean became as light as day. Great streams of molten lava shot out in every direction and yet, most ghastly touch of all, absolute silence reigned.

The blazing meteor struck the sea exactly at the horizon, that is to say about twenty miles away. We had a momentary glimpse of a fearful column of boiling water, wreathed in clouds of steam, hurling itself towards the zenith and then—darkness!

In the breathless silence my voice rang out: "Hard a-starbo'd!" and the great ship began to swing around in order to place her stem towards the point from which I was sure the inevitable danger must come.

And then came the *NOISE!*

NO words of mine can hope to describe the frightful bellowing tumult of that explosion. First came the shrill shriek produced by the brief passage of the meteor through our atmosphere. Following this was a roar as if all the artillery of all the armies and navies of that unhappy old world of ours had been fired simultaneously and the sound multiplied a thousand-fold.

Every man whose position exposed him to the direct force of the blast was hurled to the deck and many were injured. Cries of pain from the deck and screams of fear from the staterooms were mingled with the continuous, soul-shattering blasts of noise as the white hot meteor uttered its indignant protests at being sunk in four miles of salt water.

And last came the storm!

As when a boy casts a pebble into a pond to watch the ripples spread, so when the hand of fate cast into the greatest pond on earth, a pebble forty miles in diameter, ripples fled out in all directions. But these ripples were walls of water a hundred feet in height and moving with incredible rapidity!

In a moment the vessel was caught up and hurled eastward with the speed of an express train. In vain her powerful screws beat the water in a brave endeavor to stem the force of a two hundred mile hurricane! We were helpless and could only trust in the mercy of God, the strength of steel plates and the knowledge that hundreds of miles of open sea lay between us and the coasts of South America.

You know, Benedict, that there has been a prevailing impression for the last ninety years that the Deelathon arrived from the realms of space upon the meteor, whose shattered fragments now form an island in the Pacific. We who could have contradicted that idea were pledged to silence, but no one who had witnessed that hellish globe descend from the heavens and the tempest that followed it, could have believed for a moment that any living being could have survived such a cataclysm.

For five hours we drove before the storm. The bellow of the cooling meteor had long since died away in the West, but was replaced by the tumult of the wind and waves. It would take too long to tell you all the terror of that awful night. A dozen times it seemed impossible that we could remain afloat another moment and a dozen times the impossible happened.

Just before four o'clock the waves died down as suddenly as they had arisen and the *Shah of Iran* rested on an even keel in smooth water.

The rain still poured down and the roar of the tempest could be heard, as it were, far overhead. The darkness was stygian and it was impossible to see more than a hundred yards in any direction, even with the aid of the *Shah's* powerful searchlight. I untied the rope with which I had lashed myself to the bridge rail and staggered over to McFane.

"It's pretty obvious that we have been driven by some miracle into a sheltered harbor on the South American Coast," I said.

"If that's so, sir," replied Ian, "it's a miracle indeed."

"Aye, and that's not the only miracle," said Caswell's voice. "We were three hundred miles off the coast when the meteor struck and that means we've been travelling over sixty miles an hour!"

"I'd be willing to believe you," said Ian, "if you told me it was a hundred!"

"Well, thank God it's over!" I said. "Mr. McFane, please have a sounding made and if we're in shallow water, as I suspect, drop anchor. We don't want to drift on the rocks."

By the time these instructions had been carried out, the storm outside had somewhat abated, but as the tumult of the wind became less, I noticed a continuous roar which at first I attributed to breakers on the rocks outside the harbor. On glancing at the compass, I was surprised to find that the sound came from the west; the probable direction of the land.

In about an hour, the noise of the wind had died to a whisper and then the roar from the west became very noticeable. Caswell, who had remained on the bridge, called my attention to the fact that the sound was practically steady and therefore could not be breakers.

"Well, we shall have to wait for daylight to see what it is," I said. "I'm going down now to see how the passengers have stood the racket. Call me if you see or hear anything unusual."

I found the passengers huddled in the main saloon, most of them showing evidence of the severe strain to which they had been exposed, but the ship's doctor reported that aside from one broken arm and a few bruises, there were no injuries.

"We've certainly got to hand it to Professor Smithton, sir," said the Doctor. "He did more than any of us to keep the crowd under control. He was as cool as if he were in his class room."

Having given orders for coffee and biscuits to be served as soon as possible, I was going from one group to another with assurances that all danger was now past, when the fourth officer came hurriedly down the stairs and told me that Mr. Caswell wanted me on deck at once.

AS I reached the deck I saw that dawn was breaking. The curtain of rain had been withdrawn and I was able to take in at a glance the extraordinary chance to which we all owed our lives.

The *Shah* was lying peacefully at anchor in a little bay surrounded by sheer, black cliffs which seemed, in the dim light, to tower to a height of at least a thousand feet on all sides. The harbor was shaped like a pear, with the narrow part—the stem—towards the open sea.

The steady roaring sound still continued and seemed to come from a point in the cliffs directly opposite the entrance to the bay, which was about a mile across at its broadest part. The width of the "stem" was certainly not above a quarter of a mile and you will understand my feelings, Benedict, when I tell you that the sight of that narrow gap in the beetling cliffs literally turned me sick! We had all been under too great a strain all night, to realize our plight clearly, but the thought of what would have happened if we had missed that narrow opening——

I went up on the bridge and joined Caswell. I began to make some remark on the providential chance which had brought us safely into the harbor, when I saw that he was paying no attention to me, but was gazing intently to the westward.

"What's the trouble, Mr. Caswell?" I asked.

"Well, sir, I don't know if the light of that meteor has affected my eyesight, but would you mind telling me how we got in here?"

CHAPTER II

Imprisoned

STARTLED at Gordon Caswell's strange question, I followed the direction of his gaze and saw with amazement that the entire breadth of the harbor mouth was bridged by a natural breakwater, against which the waves from the open Pacific were bursting in columns of spray. No opening was visible in the reef and I was completely at a loss to answer Caswell's question as to how we had crossed it. A steamer of thirty thousand tons does not fly and even allowing for the height of the waves, it was hardly conceivable that we could have been washed over the reef without grounding.

"There must be an opening somewhere, Mr. Caswell," I said. "When you have had breakfast and it's lighter, please take number three launch and explore the reef."

While the second officer was away, the passengers began to throng the decks and many were the expressions of wonder at the remarkable harbor into which we had so providentially been carried. The black cliffs, which lost none of their height with the increasing light, were not smooth but broken by vertical seams at regular intervals. The whole scene reminded me of some picture I had seen, I could not tell where. It was Ian McFane, whose birthplace was in northern Scotland, who remarked on the close resemblance between these cliffs and the basaltic formation of the famous Fingall's Cave in the Hebrides. The vertical clefts we observed were indeed the spaces between huge hexagonal columns extending from the surface of the water to the top of the cliffs without a break, giving the semblance of a gigantic temple built for some ghastly cult of devil worship.

The water was almost without a ripple and the tier of thousand foot columns unbroken, except at the point from which the thundering roar still came. Here appeared a gap, forming a narrow gorge, and the mirror-like surface of the sea was broken by a considerable stream which cascaded over broken blocks of basalt. It was apparent that the roar we heard came from a huge waterfall, hidden from our sight in the recesses of the canyon.

Caswell returned at noon. His report only served to increase our bewilderment. With three of the men, he had landed at the base of the cliffs where the southern end of the reef abutted against them. Ordering the launch to follow them at some distance from the rocks, they had walked northward along the broken tops of basaltic columns similar to those of which the cliffs were composed.

About half way along the reef they were stopped by a torrent of water flowing across the barrier into

the open sea, and were obliged to signal to the launch to pick them up.

Landing again at the northern end of the reef, they walked back to the central stream without finding any trace of an opening. The stream was too narrow to permit the passage of such a vessel as the *Shah*, even had the water been sufficiently deep, which was obviously not the case.

They crossed the reef, which was about two hundred yards in width, and looked out upon the open Pacific, still heaving in long rollers; the aftermath of the storm of the previous night. They returned to the *Shah* completely nonplussed.

Having listened to Caswell's report, I thought it best to take the passengers into our confidence. Mounting the orchestra platform in the grand saloon, I made a short speech in which I stated that the *Shah of Iran* was imprisoned in a land-locked harbor. How she got there I could not explain, but it was impossible to get her out with anything short of dynamite, which naturally we did not possess.

"There is no possible cause for alarm, ladies and gentlemen," I said. "The *Shah* is provisioned for a long voyage and is perfectly safe in this bay. As soon as the necessary arrangements can be made, I will send an expedition inland to the nearest settlement which affords telegraphic or radio facilities. Our own radio is, unfortunately, damaged beyond possibility of repair. In a few weeks at the latest, a relief boat will arrive, bringing the necessary explosive to release the *Shah*, and I think I can promise you all some entertainment when the blasting begins. In the meantime I hope everyone will make the best of a bad job."

There was some applause and when it subsided, Professor Smithton arose and asked for permission to question the Second Officer.

"Will you kindly describe the nature of the beach along the barrier reef, Mr. Caswell," said the Professor.

"The fact is," said Caswell, "there is no beach of any kind on either side of the reef. The rocks go straight down into the water."

"One more question," said the Professor. "Do the ends of the reef lie conformably against the cliffs? I mean," he explained, smiling at Caswell's evident bewilderment, "do the rocks fit closely together?"

"No, sir, they do not," he replied. "They are very much broken up at both ends."

"Ah! Quite so!" ejaculated the Professor with satisfaction. "I think I can explain the mystery of our arrival, even if I did make a slight, though perfectly excusable mistake about the parachute," and he smiled blandly at his audience. "When the *Shah* entered the harbor, the reef was not there!"

"Not there?" I exclaimed.

"Quite so. The absence of beaches and the unconformable—excuse me, I should say broken condition of the ends of the reef show that it was recently raised above the water. The parachute—beg pardon, the meteor was apparently about forty miles in diameter, judging by the area of sky it obscured when it touched our atmosphere. If its composition were similar to that of most meteors, it would weigh in the neighborhood of fifty million million tons. It is hardly to be expected that such a missile could strike the earth at a velocity of perhaps three hundred thousand miles per hour, without causing widespread seismic disturbances, which would flow through the solid globe in ripples from the point of impact. It is these ripples which were mainly responsible for the storm, which may be regarded as a series of tidal waves, and it was these ripples, or rather one of them, which raised the barrier reef and cut us off from the ocean—fortunately, after we entered the bay!"

The Professor was going on to enlarge on his subject when the Quartermaster entered the room and came up to where I was standing.

"Beg pardon, sir. Mr. McFane told me to tell you that the ship is sinking."

FOR the second time we came very near having a serious panic. I rushed on deck but could see no signs of anything to give basis for Ian's message. In reply to my questions he informed me that he had gone down into the launch, which was still floating alongside, to get some specimens of basalt which Caswell had brought from the reef. While there, he noticed that the *Shah* was floating nearly a foot deeper than when she left port. He had given orders to have all compartments examined for a leak before reporting to me, but could find nothing.

Meanwhile the excitement among the passengers was fast getting beyond control when the Professor began waving his arms and shouting for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen! There is no cause for alarm. The *Shah* is perfectly safe, as I hope to prove in a few minutes. Captain, will you kindly have one of your men draw a bucket of sea water."

I nodded to Ian to have the request carried out and the Professor disappeared into his stateroom, returning in a few moments with a wooden case from which he took a thin glass tube with a bulb at one end. He dropped this into the bucket of water, where it floated upright. Having examined it carefully, he straightened up and said:

"Ah! Quite so! It is not the ship that is responsible for this unwarranted alarm, but the sea. The normal specific gravity of water is, of course 1.00, while that of sea water is about 1.031. Now the specific gravity of this water is only 1.014, so naturally the ship has settled."

"But what could possibly cause such a state of affairs, Professor?" I demanded.

"Ah! Quite simple, Captain. The sea water has been cut off by the reef, leaving the shallow harbor land-locked. There is a tremendous amount of fresh water running into the bay from that canyon at the western end and it is forcing out the salt water over the reef, as Mr. Caswell told us. Naturally the ship is settling and will continue to do so—" and he made a dramatic pause. "—for about six inches further, when the water will be entirely fresh."

Needless to say, the Professor's stock, which had slumped after the "parachute" fiasco and made a quick recovery during the meeting in the saloon, went sky high as the result of this second example of scientific acumen. Indeed, I was so much impressed with Prof. Smithton's versatility, common sense and unfailing good nature, that I invited him to attend a conference of the officers to be held that

afternoon for the purpose of laying definite plans for sending out a relief party.

At the Professor's suggestion, I also asked two young men named Alderson and FitzGerald; athletic young fellows, both members of the English and American Alpine Clubs, who were enroute to New Zealand to attempt the ascent of an unclimbed peak in the Southern Alps.

When these three passengers and the officers were gathered in the smoking room, I made a brief outline of the situation and asked for suggestions, explaining that the important thing was to get in touch with civilization as soon as possible.

The Professor rose and asked if I could state the approximate location of the *Shah* and whether it would not be better to send out a relief party by sea, rather than by land.

"I am afraid that it is impossible to give a satisfactory answer to your first question, Professor. We have no way of determining how far North or South we were carried by the storm and the heavy pall of clouds makes an observation out of the question."

"Ah! Quite so! The clouds are undoubtedly the result of the immense amount of steam produced by contact betwen the meteor and the ocean. I venture to predict that, on account of the great size of the meteor, which would preclude more than a small portion being immersed, these clouds will continue for a long period of time."

"With regard to sending out a party by sea," I continued, "I had thought of that possibility, but aside from the great difficulty of transporting one of the launches across the reef, there are two serious objections to that plan. One is that the sea is too rough for a small craft to navigate in safety and the other is that all our launches are electric and intended for short trips. The storage batteries would not last for over a couple of days at the outside."

"Ah! Quite so!" said the Professor. "Then I venture to suggest, Captain, that you send a party on shore at the mouth of the river, tomorrow, and determine the feasibility of reaching the top of the cliffs. I foresee that the presence of a waterfall might prove a serious obstruction. Here is where the mountaineering skill of our two young friends, Mr. Alderson and Mr. FitzGerald, will be invaluable. If the cliffs are successfully surmounted, you can then arrange the personnel of your party and the necessary outfit of provisions."

The Professor's suggestions met with unanimous approval. No sooner did the result of our conference become known than a number of the passengers asked my permission to accompany the proposed expedition. Thus it happened that a large and lighthearted party crossed the strip of smooth water that separated us from the shore and set foot on the narrow beach just north of the mouth of the river.

CHAPTER III

The Coming of the Deelathon

ACCOMPANIED by the Professor and the two mountaineers, I led the way inland. Presently we approached the point where the river made its way through the wall of cliffs and turning sharply to the north, scrambled over masses of fallen rock into the entrance of the canyon, the roar of falling water growing louder as we advanced.

Above the fallen rock we turned to the right around a magnificent group of the hexagonal basalt columns and the words of some remark I was about to make, died on my lips in sheer wonderment. We were confronted with a sight which, for appalling grandeur is probably unequalled anywhere on earth.

We stood on the edge of a vast, cup-like depression in the rock. On every side towered the pillars of basalt, as smooth and perfect as though they had been carved and polished by the hand of man. On the farther side of this huge theatre, the river descended from the brow of the cliffs in one mighty thousand-foot leap, to strike squarely on the edge of the great cup, which was filled to the brim with a churning mass of foam, while the deafening roar of the tortured waters echoed and re-echoed from the black walls.

So tremendous were the cliffs that we stood, as it were, at the bottom of a circular pit and the light that filtered down from above was but a dim similitude of day.

For a long time we stood transfixed with awe, while the other members of the party gradually joined us, their laughter quenched by the wonder of the sight that met their gaze. As our eyes became more accustomed to the half-light, we were able to see that it was only around the rocky margins of the pool that the water was beaten into foam. The entire centre was occupied by a mass of water perfectly smooth and piled up like a dome of glass.

At first sight this central mass seemed motionless but we soon realized that its whole surface was the playground of titanic forces. The entire structure quivered as though it were in a state of the most delicate equilibrium, as indeed it was, and it seemed as though one had only to throw a pebble to see it dissolve in a slather of foam, like a giant bubble.

Presently the voice of the Professor broke the spell.

"I'm a old man, Captain, and in my time I've seen the glories of the starry heavens as perhaps few have done, but I thank God that He has spared me to see this!"

"I thought the great snow peaks were the most beautiful things in creation," said FitzGerald, "but this has got them all beat."

"And look at the light, Fred!" exclaimed his sister, who had joined us. "It's like all the opals in the world rolled into one. Or rather, like a soap bubble on the point of bursting, for these colors move."

Miss FitzGerald's exclamation brought us to the realization that this water was not like other water, but seemed to glow with an effulgence of its own. Streamers of light of every imaginable color darted here and there over the shining surface of the great dome, now blending into masses of rose or green or violet, now mingling in a glittering confusion of rainbow hues.

Of course, we knew that we were looking at some remarkable natural optical illusion, caused by the reflection of the light from above, but the effect was none the less impressive. The living, shining dome of color, set in its girdle of snowy foam; the silent cliffs with their ebony towers; the thundering column of water eternally descending from above; all

combined into a dramatic whole whose overwhelming grandeur was foiled by a broad band of emerald green turf which framed the central cup and was dotted here and there with graceful palm trees, whose fronds glistened with diamond drops of spray.

At last I tore my eyes from that living opal and turned to the two mountaineers.

"Well, gentlemen, what do you think of our chances of getting out of this?"

"Hopeless!" replied Alderson.

"Absolutely!" agreed FitzGerald. "We're by way of being mountaineers, but we're not flies! There's not a handhold anywhere. But, good Lord! What's that!"

At his cry of surprise, we all looked up, to behold, poised in the air above the rim of the waterfall, a great ball like a gigantic soap bubble.

"Your parachute, I guess, Professor!" said Caswell slyly. "Look, it's coming down."

VERY slowly the ball descended into the abyss and now we realized that it was far larger than we had at first supposed. It was apparently made of some transparent material like glass, except that it glittered with the same play of colors as that which appeared on the surface of the pool. Around the centre of the balloon, if balloon it was, was a broad band of some metal, such as copper or gold. This girdle formed the equator and at either pole was a projecting boss of the same metal, from which were suspended by cables, inverted cups which hung some distance below the globe.

As the strange aerial visitor drew nearer we saw that the equatorial band was studded at intervals with circular windows of the glassy material. From the centre of each of these projected a long needle, the purpose of which we could not guess unless they were for directing the course of the vessel—a theory which we afterwards found to be correct.

Very slowly the great ball sank until the two cups touched the grassy sward about three hundred yards from us. Still it sank, the cables from which the cups were suspended being withdrawn into the two metal bosses, until the lower edge of the central girdle was but a foot above the ground. Here the shining sphere hung, swaying gently in the wind that rose from the churning water.

A moment later one of the circular windows swung open and a figure stepped down upon the grass, followed by several others. They started to walk around the margin of the pool towards us and as they drew nearer the Professor exclaimed in surprise.

"Good Heavens! They're Indians! Look at the headdress!"

"Don't worry, Sir Charles," I said. "We're armed," and I drew my revolver from its holster, but as I did so I had a curious sensation that my warlike act was a gesture absolutely without meaning.

"Oh! I wasn't afraid," replied Sir Charles, "but they haven't got any—I mean, they're rather lightly clad for polite society, you know."

The group from the sphere were now near enough for me to see that Sir Charles was correct. There were five or six men and two women and each wore only a great headdress of what seemed to be white feathers. I also realized that these were no Indians. The color of the skin which had at a distance appeared coppery, was now revealed as rosy pink, not due to the presence of any coloring pigment, but as though the skin were so transparent and the health so abounding, that the blood literally shone through.

I began to agree with Sir Charles that it would be wise for the ladies to retire while we interviewed these strange inhabitants. I turned to make some such suggestion and caught sight of Margaret FitzGerald staring at the approaching party, her eyes shining with excitement.

There was a burst of admiration from the passengers, men and women joining in exclamations of delight at the physical perfection and nobility of countenance of these splendid beings who were now only a few yards from us.

The party came to a halt and one of the tallest of the men stepped forward and saluted us with a curious but graceful gesture. As he did so I realized with a distinct shock that what we had taken to be a feather headdress was not a headdress at all, but was a semi-transparent, membranous frill, actually growing upon the heads of these beings. This frill or "thonmelek" as we afterwards learned was their word for it, ran across the forehead just in front of the hair, down each side of the neck, over the shoulders and terminated just above the elbows. I know of nothing which it so much resembled as the fin of a flying fish, except that the "thonmelek" was infinitely more delicate, but it was supported upon blades of cartilage in much the same way. All this we absorbed at a glance and then the tall man, evidently the appointed spokesman of the party, addressed us.

"Deelarana, Deelathon zeloma ek tara!" and raising their hands in the same graceful gesture, all the others echoed "Zeloma!"

"Zeloma!" exclaimed Sir Charles. "I say, Captain, it sounds as if they were giving us a salute of welcome."

"Yes, I agree with you," I replied, "and they all have the kindliest smile I ever saw on human countenance. I am certain they mean us no harm."

I turned back to the tall stranger with the intention of trying to convey our friendliness to him, by means of signs, when his lips opened and he said in the most perfect English, without a trace of accent.

"Yes, I welcome you. Us, the Deelathon, mean no harm. Welcome!"

OF all the strange incidents of this strange voyage, I think this was the most astonishing. A thrill of excitement passed through the crowd. We, sophisticated citizens of the twentieth century, had discovered an unknown country, inhabited by an unknown race as beautiful as angels, who wore no clothes, grew a frill on their foreheads, and—spoke English without an accent! True, they spoke it mechanically and not quite correctly, but it was English!

"You speak English, friend!" I exclaimed.

The tall man shook his head and smiled.

"But you understand it?"

He smiled again and said, "Yes!"

"Why, Captain," cried Miss FitzGerald, "this is like a romance out of a book!"

At these apparently innocent words our visitors, the Deelathon (for you will have guessed that it was they) showed their first sign of excitement and we saw that their frills or thonmeleks, which were normally pearly white, flashed with rainbow colors, like the surface of the Dome of Water. One of the girls stepped forward and spoke rapidly in their soft, musical language, several times repeating the word "book."

Now it happened that Miss FitzGerald had brought a volume of Emerson's essays with her, to read while her brother and Mr. Alderson were exploring the cliffs. She smiled and handed it to the lovely girl, saying:

"This is a book."

The two Deelathon examined the volume with great interest and then the man handed it back to Miss FitzGerald with a questioning look.

"It is a book," she said. "We read it."

At once the tall man caught up her words.

"Read it!" he exclaimed. "Read it."

Miss FitzGerald turned to me in surprise. "They say they can't speak English," she said, "and yet they keep on speaking it! I don't understand!"

"Don't you see?" replied her brother. "They just say the words we say—like parrots."

"No, I don't agree with you, Mr. FitzGerald," interrupted Prof. Smithton. "It is true that they repeat our words, but they combine them intelligently into new sentences, almost as though they could read our thoughts."

The tall man listened attentively to this discussion and then smiling, pointed to the book and repeated:

"Read!"

"Perhaps you had better do as they ask," I said to Miss FitzGerald.

And then took place one of the strangest scenes I have ever witnessed. At a gesture from their leader, the Deelathon seated themselves on the grass and we followed their example, for an hour, nothing but the boom of the waterfall and the soft, sweet voice of the American girl reading to those gods and goddesses, the words of the great American essayist, could be heard. At first she stopped at intervals and looked up, but the Deelathon would say softly, "Read!"

And she continued.

At last, when she had read fully half of the book, the tall man put up his hands to check her and rose to his feet.

"Friends from the sea," he said, "we, the people of the Thon, welcome you, the speakers of a strange, harsh language, until this moment unknown to us. We ask you to forgive our seeming inhospitality, but of course you realize that it was impossible for us to address you in your own language until we had heard it spoken. Therefore I asked this beautiful maiden to read from her record, which she calls a book.

"But enough of this matter of speech which doubtless you already know, by the Thon. Now that we are able to talk freely, accept our welcome and hospitality and then tell us how we, the Deelathon, may serve you. I am Toron, maker of Zeeths, and this is my companion, Torona," and he laid his hand gently upon the head of the girl who had asked Miss FitzGerald for the book.

To say that we were dumfounded at this fluent address from a being who, only an hour previously, had said, "Us mean no harm," would be putting it very mildly. For a few moments we were too astonished to reply. The Professor was the first to regain his wits. He rose, bowed courteously, and said: "Strangers, who call yourselves the Deelathon, we thank you for your welcome. I am Professor Smithton and this is Captain Clinton. We, with many others, were driven into this harbor by the terrible storm, and escape has been cut off. Therefore we seek a way inland."

"But have you no Zeeths?" asked Torona.

"I am afraid not," replied the Professor smiling. "We do not even know what a Zeeth may be."

"You do not know?" exclaimed the Deelathon girl, her thonmelek rippling with color. "But does not the Thon tell you?"

"Again I must admit ignorance," replied Smithton. "I do not even know what you mean by the Thon."

At these words the Deelathon leaped to their feet in uncontrollable excitement. Their thonmeleks furled and unfurled, flashing with a hundred hues and we heard repeatedly the words *"Zeel epthona Thon!"* ("They know not the Thon!")

Finally Toron turned to us and said:

"You will forgive our unseemly emotion, Smithton, and you, Clinton. We were surprised at your apparent inability to understand us when we spoke our own language. We are doubly astonished that you are surprised at our fluent English. But we are astounded at your statement that you do not know the Thon and can only suppose two things: either that you and your friends are very unhappy or that you say the thing which is Epthona—or as you would express it, untrue."

"I can only assure you, friend Toron," said the Professor earnestly, "that we are not guilty of falsehood when we say we do not know this Thon, neither are we especially unhappy, though what connection that has with the Thon I do not understand."

"And are there many like you in the world?" asked one of the Deelathon men, wonderingly. "People who know not the Thon and who have lost their thonmeleks?" and he passed his hand upward over that glittering appendage.

"There are countless millions," replied the Professor.

"What you tell us," said Toron, "fills us with sorrow. True, we of the Deelathon have a legend that a people existed upon the face of the earth, who knew not the wonderful benefits which are constantly showered upon us by the Thon-ta-Zheena, but we did not believe it possible. It seemed like a story of fish flying through the air, or birds who lived under water. The news you tell us we must carefully consider. We will return to our people and I will call a conference of the Klendeela. In the meantime, return to your Zeeth-that-floats-on-the-water and at sunset I will visit you."

The Deelathon raised their hands in salutation, folded their thonmeleks and returned to the crystal globe which presently rose steadily into the air and disappeared over the brink of the waterfall.

AS soon as we set foot once more on the deck of *Shah of Iran* I left the passengers to narrate to their friends who had remained on board, the strange events through which we had passed, and beckoning to Professor Smithton, conducted him to my cabin and closed the door.

When we had lighted our cigars, I said:

"Well, Professor, what do you make of it?"

"Candidly, Captain, there are a good many things I don't understand at all."

"This 'Thon' they talked about so much, for example," I said, "and how they were able to talk English so fluently."

"Well, no," said Smithton, thoughtfully, "I think I begin to have a hazy idea of what they were driving at."

"That's more than I have," I said.

"No, the things I can't fathom," the Professor went on, "are what supports that dome of water and why it shines like a fire-opal and what holds up that crystal balloon of theirs and why they have frills on their heads and a few other things like that. But the Thon—— Didn't you notice how that word kept on creeping up in their language? Deelathon—people of the Thon. Thonmelek—that frill of theirs. Do they name themselves for their natural headdress?"

"That would hardly explain their tremendous excitement when they discovered we didn't know this Thon of theirs," I objected, "and why they regarded us as so unhappy because we didn't have frilly things on our heads."

"Ah! Quite so!" mused the Professor, "but they also said 'Epthona' and translated it as 'untrue.' I believe I've got it!" and he jumped up and began to pace the cabin excitedly. "Thon means truth. They worship some god or fetish which stands for truth and naturally they think we're a benighted race because we don't follow their religion."

"But that doesn't explain their sudden command of English," I objected.

"Quite so!" said the professor.

There was a knock at my door and Miss FitzGerald peeped in.

"Am I intruding on a conference?"

"Not at all," I said. "Please come in and see if your intuition can solve what to our more masculine reason, is as black as ink."

"What is the problem, Captain?" she asked, seating herself on the edge of my desk. I explained that the Professor and I had been discussing the strange inhabitants of the mainland and trying to decide what they meant by "Thon."

Margaret FitzGerald looked first at me and then at the Professor, her eyes twinkling.

"Honestly, I don't know any more about it than you do, but I think I can guess."

"What is it?" I exclaimed.

"Why, you said it when I came in," she said.

"Ah! Truth," said Smithton.

"No, not exactly. I was thinking of what the Captain said. He asked me to use my supposed intuition. That's it. Intuition. Thon."

"By heaven! You're right!" cried the Professor. "Some highly developed sense of intuition, combined with marvelous memories, and reasoning powers which enabled them to understand our language after hearing the words once! Marvellous! They're mental prodigies! That explains their idea that we are so miserable because we haven't got their 'Thon'."

"I don't think it explains everything, Professor," I replied. "I feel that there is some deeper meaning underlying that simple word 'Thon'. There's something about those people that makes me say, that if this Thon of theirs could make me like them—like them not only physically but mentally and morally—I'd never rest until I solved the mystery."

"I felt the same way, Captain," said Miss FitzGerald. "When I was reading aloud to them I had the strangest sensation as though some loving, comforting power were folding me in its arms and it seemed to emanate from the Deelathon. Oh! I know it sounds foolish, but I felt just as if my soul were in a warm bath!"

"Perhaps my chosen profession renders me less susceptible to subconscious impression than you and Captain Clinton," said the astronomer, "nevertheless, I must admit that I feel complete confidence in these Deelathon and their kindly intentions. We can only wait for the return of our friend Toron at sunset."

"Right!" I said, rising, "and now, Miss FitzGerald and Professor, what do you say to lunch?"

CHAPTER III

The Klendeela

THROUGHOUT the long afternoon until the sun approached and touched the narrow sea-horizon visible in the gap to the west, eager eyes were incessantly turned to the crest of the landward cliffs, watching for the return of the friendly Deelathon.

Suddenly there was a cry: "They're coming!" and a moment later we saw a crystal globe travelling through the air just above the level of the plateau. It was much smaller than the one we had seen in the ravine but it glittered with the same flux of prismatic hues and was equipped with the same equatorial band and polar bosses of reddish metal, which Toron afterwards told us was an alloy of gold, copper and selenium.

For a few seconds the Zeeth (for this was the name by which the Deelathon called their strange aerial vessels) hovered motionless above the cliff-edge, and then with a suddenness which made me gasp it shot out towards the ship with tremendous velocity, as though hurled from some invisible cannon. In less than ten seconds the Zeeth was hovering above the deck, having come to a dead stop in its headlong flight, as suddenly as it had started. Then it descended with infinite care until its suspended cups rested on the after promenade deck where a space was cleared by the passengers for its reception.

One of the crystal windows swung inward and next moment Toron stepped upon the deck, followed by the girl Torona, whom he had called his companion.

They raised their hands in the Deelathon greeting and smiling at the amazed throng of men and women with that peculiarly radiant smile which is so char-

acteristic of all these people, they cried: "Zeloma! Welcome!"

Now, as you doubtless know, Benedict (said Captain Clinton) in the ages before the Visitation, the people of the world and especially of the so-called civilized areas, were governed in their actions not so much by reason or intelligence as by custom. It was regarded as a sign of the most depraved savagery to wear clothing for the purpose for which it was designed, namely, warmth, and people wore the most extraordinary garments, oftentimes hideously ugly, simply because they were, as we used to say, "the fashion." Early in the twentieth century there was evident a healthy tendency to get away from this bondage of fashion and return to the sensible use of clothing for warmth alone, but it proved to be simply another phase in the cycle of unreasoning custom and by the year 1940 the pendulum had swung to the other extreme, with the result that people were again loading themselves with unnecessary garments as cumbersome and ugly as those of the Victorian Era. The natural outcome of this practice was an extraordinary attitude of false shame with regard to the human body, which is quite incomprehensible to us today. Nor was this modesty without its basis in reason, for the imperfections of the average human body illustrated the meaning of the old Greek saying that it was forbidden to walk the streets of Athens naked, not because it was indecent but because it was ugly!

You will easily understand, therefore, that the eight hundred or more passengers who had not previously seen the Deelathon, regarded our story of a god-like people who wore no clothes, with mingled feelings of curiosity and disgust. The ladies, especially, listened with raised eyebrows to Miss FitzGerald's enthusiastic descriptions of the physical perfections of the Deelathon.

Having due regard to this state of mind I had some doubt as to the sort of welcome which would be accorded to the visitors.

My misgivings were soon dissipated. No sooner had the Deelathon uttered their words of greeting, than old Lady Gibson, mother of Sir Charles and the very epitome of British respectability, stepped forward and slipping her arm around Torona's waist, kissed her on both cheeks.

"My dear, you are very welcome to the *Shah of Iran* and you too, Sir," and the little old lady looked up nodding and smiling into the radiant face of the tall Deelathon.

Lady Gibson's impulsive action broke the ice and in a moment Toron and Torona were surrounded with passengers vying with each other to do honor to the beautiful visitors.

Presently Torona raised her head for silence.

"My dear companion, Toron," she said, "has been in consultation with the Klendeela and he has a message for you. But first I want to thank you all for your greeting. You Deela Rana, or as you would say, People of the Sea, are very strange to us with your unhappy faces and your burden of clothes—though perhaps that is why you are unhappy. I am sure it would make me so! But I know we of the Deelathon must also seem strange to you, and so we thank you for your friendliness. The Thon tells us that great goodness is hidden behind your tired, unhappy faces, and therefore I love you all and especially this fair maiden, Margaret, whose book made it possible for us to learn your language." And she threw her arm around Miss FitzGerald and kissed her.

They stood there side by side, the American girl and the Deelathon maiden. The passengers must have been hard put to decide which was the fairer. For myself I had not a moment of doubt. Beautiful as was Torona, with a beauty almost unearthly, Margaret was more lovely in my eyes. As you will have guessed, Benedict, Margaret FitzGerald was she who afterwards became your great-grandmother.

AND then Toron spoke.

"Friends," he said, "Torona, my companion, has told you that you seem strange to us, and this is true, for it is almost beyond belief that any beings exist who know not the Thon. I have been in consultation with the Klendeela, which is our council, and this is the message they have sent to you. The Klendeela understands that you are imprisoned by the barrier reef which sank and rose during the earthquake. Since your Zeeth-which-floats-on-the-sea, will not float in the air, like our Zeeths, we want to tell you that with the greatest of our Zeeths we can raise your vessel into the air and transport it across the reef at any time you desire. The Klendeela thinks, however, that you should not leave us until we have entertained you and, if the Thon permits, made known to you the meaning of that Thon which seems so mysterious to you. To this end they have commanded me to ask some few of you to return with me. Smithton, and you Clinton and the maiden with the book, and her brother and some few others whom you may select."

"You bring us good news, Toron," I replied, "and we accept the invitation of your council. At least, the others will doubtless do so, but as for me, I am in command here, and it is not our custom for the captain to leave his ship for any length of time."

Toron nodded his understanding and then engaged in a brief discussion with Torona. At last he addressed me again.

"We understand and honor your custom, Clinton and are prepared to overcome the difficulty. In the morning I will return with our greatest Zeeth and will transport your ship above the cliffs to a lake which is in the midst of our houses. There you can remain as long as seems fit to you, visiting us at your pleasure and returning to your ship each night. When you desire to leave us, we will lift your ship into the sea and you can return whence you came."

The idea of lifting thirty thousand tons of steel plates and girders bodily into the air might well have caused more than a qualm of doubt in our minds, but such was the complete confidence with which the Deelathon inspired us that I assented to this amazing proposal without hesitation. The tremendous speed of which the Zeeth was capable and the perfect control with which it was handled removed all doubt that we might have felt of the ability of the Deelathon to carry out this titanic engineering feat.

Having arranged the time at which they would return in the morning, Toron and Torona saluted us and entered their Zeeth, which rose from the deck,

and travelling in a tremendous parabola, disappeared behind the black columns of basalt.

There was little sleep that night for any one. The insomnia was produced not at all by alarm at the prospects of the morrow, but by the fact that everyone was speculating on the meaning of these strange events. All felt that we stood on the brink of some great adventure which was to have a permanent effect upon our lives. That the Deelathon meant us anything but good never entered our minds. As Lady Gibson remarked to Margaret:

"My dear, when that glorious creature Toron looked at me I felt as though I must tell the truth. If I had told even the tiniest white lie, I should have jumped in the sea and drowned myself to hide my shame!"

Next morning every passenger and member of the crew was on deck early. At the appointed time the Zeeth soared into view, and accustomed as we were becoming to marvels, the size of this tremendous sphere staggered us. It measured fully three thousand feet around the equator and from either pole hung huge cables of the same reddish metal that was used universally among the Deelathon for engineering purposes.

When the Zeeth was hovering above the *Shah* I ordered the anchors to be hauled in and we floated free. The Zeeth sank slowly until the inverted cups which terminated the cables hung suspended level with the mastheads.

I had anticipated that it would be necessary to spend several days rigging steel cables under the *Shah* in order to provide a cradle to support the immense weight of the vessel. I had mentioned this to Toron the previous day, but he had smiled and assured me that no preparations were necessary.

The great globe hung poised in the air above the ship and then a most amazing thing happened. A slight tremor passed through the vessel and it began to rise slowly towards those inverted cups. Inch by inch rose the great liner, the water cascading from her bottom plates, until the keel was clear of the surface and we hung in mid-air, supported by some invisible force.

The cups from which this force apparently emanated were still separated from the deck by fully a hundred feet and yet the *Shah* hung securely on a level keel, so that in the saloon, where dinner had been laid, not even a drop of water was spilled from the filled glasses.

Slowly we rose until we hung above the level of the cliffs and then the Zeeth with its enormous burden began to move towards the land.

AS soon as we became accustomed to our strange situation, the rails were crowded with a throng eager to catch a first glimpse of the new land. We beheld a rolling park-like country, dotted here and there with groups of palms and other trees. In the far distance we could faintly discern another wall of black cliffs and beyond them rose range on range of snow-capped peaks which we rightly supposed were the mighty Andes. A wide river, like a silver ribbon, wound its way from the distant snow fields. In the centre of the level area, which might have been fifty miles in diameter, the river broadened into a gleaming lake and then continued on its placid way, amplified by numerous tributaries, until it plunged over the cliffs into the Pit of the Shining Pool.

As we drew nearer, we caught sight of innumerable buildings, not crowded together into towns, but scattered among the groves of trees. These buildings, which were of every imaginable size, were all of the same general design, consisting of an ellipsoidal roof of the same glassy crystal of which the Zeeth was constructed, supported on a circular colonnade of marble pillars. Hundreds of Zeeths of all sizes darted here and there through the air and as their occupants caught sight of us, flocked towards us and followed our course until we seemed to move in a cloud of fairy bubbles.

Many of the houses were built on the top of the basaltic columns bordering the river and we could see groups of the Deelathon standing or sitting on the verge of the cliff, watching our progress with absorbed interest.

As we drew nearer to the lake we observed, standing on a slight elevation, a very large building, which we rightly took to be the meeting place of the Klendeela or council. This was built on the same circular plan as the dwellings, but was of vastly greater size.

At last the *Shah of Iran* hung above the centre of the lake and the Zeeth gradually sank until the *Shah* was resting once more in her native element.

That afternoon a small Zeeth shot out from the shore and landed on the deck. It contained our friends Toron and Torona, bringing with them a splendid Deelathon whom Toron introduced to us as Rethmar, the head of the Klendeela.

"The Klendeela is assembled and would be honored by your presence," said Toron. "You, Clinton, and the wise man, Smithton, and the fair maiden, Margaret, and her brother, Fred."

"We answer the summons of the Klendeela gladly, Toron," I said, "because we fully trust you and are anxious to learn more of your country."

"That wish shall be granted," replied Toron. "In the meantime, while you are in consultation with the Klendeela, many of our people will come to your ship in pleasure Zeeths and take as many of your friends as care to go, to their homes; for all the Deelathon are delighted to offer hospitality to our visitors from the sea."

Torona explained that we were to cross the lake in their Zeeth and land on the farther shore, from which point we would walk to the assembly hall, in order that we might have an opportunity to see some of the country on our way.

Rethmar reentered the Zeeth, beckoning me with a smile to follow him. I approached the circular opening, not without trepidation, but I was hardly prepared for what took place. I set my foot on the edge of the door, while Rethmar extended a hand to help me. Next instant, I seemed to be falling. All sense of material existence vanished and in a whirl of confusion I seemed to be floating in space. Then I felt the reassuring clasp of Rethmar's hand and gradually I regained my composure, only to find to my astonishment that instead of resting on the bottom of the Zeeth, I was actually

poised in space at the centre of the globe, without visible means of support.

Then Rethmar drew me to the side and, slipping a broad, flexible belt around my waist, fastened it with a catch of some sort.

I now perceived that there was one of these belts midway between each of the crystal windows attached to the metal band which encircled the equator.

And now another surprise awaited me. Although the Zeeth was made of some crystal, when viewed from without, the globe was quite opaque, so that it was impossible to see the occupants. When viewed from the interior, however, the glassy material was so perfectly transparent that it simply seemed non-existent and one was conscious only of the equatorial band and polar bosses, apparently suspended in air, without support.

Rethmar, having observed the state of mental aberration which possessed me upon my first entry, floated across the Zeeth to the open window and spoke to Toron in his own tongue, and I heard Toron warning the others not to be alarmed.

Professor Smithton was the next and I could hardly forbear laughing as the somewhat corpulent form of the astronomer floated lightly upwards under the guidance of Rethmar, who coolly passed one of the belts around the Professor, leaving him suspended horizontally above my head.

"Why! Good Heavens, Captain!" sputtered the Professor. "Wonders upon wonders! Do you realize what our extraordinary sensations indicate?"

"No, I can't say that I do, except that I feel as though I were having a nightmare and can't wake up!"

"WELL, well, well!" ejaculated the Professor. "These people are a thousand years ahead of us in science, as well as in mental development. They have overcome gravitation. This transparent substance of which the globe is composed is opaque to gravitation, with the result that it not only has no weight, but nothing within it—ourselves for example—has any weight either. Marvellous!"

Now the others entered the Zeeth, each of my shipmates expressing wonder at the unexpected sensation of floating in mid-air. When we were all secured in place by the equatorial straps, Toron and Torona stepped into the Zeeth. The girl sailed lightly across the globe and slipped one of the belts around her, but Toron remained floating in the air and closed the crystal window behind him.

I began to look around for some machinery by which the Zeeth could be moved, but could see nothing except a small handle in the centre of each window. Toron began to turn these handles, propelling himself from one to another by slight touches against the walls of the globe, and I perceived that the handles were connected to the long needles which projected from the centre of the windows.

There was a slight shock and I looked downward. The deck of the *Shah of Iran* was falling away with tremendous speed and the country opened out until we could see for many miles in every direction. Toron manipulated some more of the handles and the Zeeth began to move rapidly towards the shore.

Now, of course, we were all accustomed to riding on the old-fashioned airplanes, which had been brought to great perfection during the second quarter of the twentieth century, but the sensation was no more comparable to that of riding in a Zeeth than falling downstairs is to be compared to sliding down a snow slope on skis. There was no roar or vibration of machinery, simply swift, effortless motion, and the absolute transparency of the globe and our own lack of weight added to the illusion that we were flying through space at our own volition.

As we flew towards the great building which we had seen that morning, Toron said:

"I heard your remark, Smithton, and you are quite right in your explanation of the cause for the Zeeth's lack of weight. The globe is composed of elathongar, an artificial crystal, which, as you say, is opaque to gravitation."

"Ah! Quite so!" said the Professor, "but I still fail to understand what force propels the Zeeth, since opacity to gravitation would simply cause it to rise upward from the earth's surface."

"The propelling force is contained or rather produced by the rods attached to these handles. They are acted upon by the Thon," replied Toron. "And by turning them on their axes the force is up, down, or in either direction, as we wish."

"The Thon again!" exclaimed the Professor. "What is this Thon, Toron?"

The Deelathon smiled gravely. "That I am not permitted to tell you—yet!" he replied.

Now we sank gently to a landing on a grassy plain near the shore of the lake. We alighted, and headed by Rethmar, started up a winding path. At first we were hampered by the sudden transition in weight from nothing to one hundred and sixty pounds or thereabouts, but the novelty soon wore off and we looked about us.

Everywhere we saw the simple and yet beautiful dwellings of the Deelathon and everywhere we saw the same ellipsoidal roof of elathongar supported by pillars of stone. Later, during our stay in this strange land, we received and accepted many invitations to visit the homes of the Deelathon and we discovered that both floors and roof were universally made of this gravity-shielding crystal, thus reducing the effort required to accomplish any work to a minimum.

The force of gravity could be adjusted to any degree desired by means of a sliding panel arrangement, but during our social calls these were generally kept closed so that we simply reclined in the air and talked! Some of the passengers spent the night in the Deelathon houses and after the perfect relaxation of literally "sleeping upon air," found difficulty in sleeping at all on an ordinary bed.

PRESENTLY we entered a great avenue of stately palms at the end of which gleamed the white pillars of the assembly hall. Guided by Rethmar we walked up a noble stairway, flanked by mighty columns and stood in the centre of a splendid amphitheatre surrounded by rows and rows of marble seats or couches. As we entered we were again conscious of loss of weight, so that we seemed to float rather than walk across the crystal pavement.

Hundreds of Deelathon, both men and women, reclined on the seats, but as we entered they all rose to their feet. There was a rustling sound and a ripple of colored light as their thonmeleks flashed erect upon their heads. Their hands rose in the Deelathon salute and there was a unanimous shout of:

"Zeloma, Deelarana!"

Rethmar led us to seats at one side of the huge auditorium and then floated to the centre and addressed the assemblage in his own language. When he resumed his seat, Toron rose and began to speak in English.

"Friends from across the sea," he said, "the Klendeela has asked me to speak for them because I alone can talk your language freely, thanks to the maiden Margaret. We have brought you here out of no idle curiosity, or merely to offer you our hearty welcome, but because we believe it lies in our power to do you great good. Not alone to you and those with you, but also to the countless millions like you, who, as you tell us, inhabit the world, to us unknown.

"But before offering you this priceless gift, known to us as the Thon, the Klendeela requests you to tell us more of that world in which you live. Tell us of its history, its present conditions, its science and its religion. Thus will the Klendeela be able to judge if we are right in revealing to you the secret of the Thon.

"Fear not to speak in your own tongue, for all will understand you. Fear only to say that which is epthona or false, for we shall know the thona from the epthona."

Professor Smithton, who had, at my urgent request, agreed to act as spokesman for our party, rose to his feet and, steadying himself for a moment against his tendency to rise above the floor, said:

"Men of the Deelathon, the feeling of confidence with which you inspired us at our first meeting is made stronger by your welcome and your offer. We do not know what this gift of the Thon may portend, but we are agreed that if your self-evident health and happiness are due in any way to this Thon, we greatly desire to share the secret with you.

"We will willingly describe to you the world in which we live, but to do this completely, it would be necessary to combine the knowledge of many minds. Among the passengers and crew of our ship are persons from every walk of life. I suggest that you allow us to select some of these persons to deal with the various phases of the subject."

"Your excellent suggestion shall be carried out," replied Toron after a moment's consultation with Rethmar. "Return now to your ship and make all necessary arrangements with your friends. Each morning the Klendeela will assemble to hear your speakers. Each afternoon we of the Deelathon will welcome you to our homes or show you the beauties of our country on foot or in our Zeeths."

"Before we retire," said the Professor, "is it permitted to ask one question?"

"Any question will be answered freely, Smithton," replied Toron, "so long as it does not relate to the Thon."

"I wish to know," said the Professor, "why, with your Zeeths, incomparably superior to our finest means of transportation, you have not long ago visited this outer world in which we live."

"There are reasons which I cannot explain to you now," said Toron, "indeed, we do not fully understand them ourselves. This, however, I can tell you: The power of the crystal we call elathongar is in some way associated with the black rock that underlies our country. When we attempt to pass far beyond this rock, our Zeeths sink to the ground.* Neither is it possible for us to leave our country on foot, for we are hemmed in on one side by the sea and on the other by several rows of unclimbable cliffs."

Toron escorted us back to the ship and left us. I called the passengers together and having told them of our meeting with the Klendeela, asked for volunteers to give the strangest course of lectures that has ever been delivered.

NEXT morning and day by day for a week we crossed the lake to the assembly hall where the Klendeela gathered to listen in a silence unbroken save by the voice of the lecturer and the rustling of those strange rainbow-tinted frills which seemed to respond to every emotion of the hearers.

Dr. Malone of Yale spoke on ancient history and Dr. Calthorp of Harvard on modern history and social conditions. Professor Smithton lectured on pure science and Fred FitzGerald on applied science and mechanics. Dr. Ronald, the ship's surgeon, gave an outline of medicine and I spoke briefly on navigation. General Thornton of the U. S. Army described the development of war from the days of the sword and crossbow to its present state of perfection. Dr. Maxwell of Leland Stanford spoke on psychology and Bishop Brander of Washington lectured on comparative religion.

Thus the days passed while those god-like creatures listened with absorbed attention to all. We had got over the wonder of their being able to understand us. We had become accustomed to the strange sensations incident to the use of the gravitation shields. But our amazement at the beauty and health and radiant happiness of these marvellous beings remained unabated. Could Carlyle have seen the Klendeela before writing his Sartor Resartus, he would have hesitated before ridiculing the picture of a Parliament without clothes!

Once only was there any interruption to the steady flow of words. It was during the latter part of Professor Smithton's lecture on physics. He was explaining some of the more recent discoveries of the scientists when there was a rustle of thonmeleks, a flash of color and the members of the Klendeela leaped to their feet amid a babble of voices. In the confusion we could hear the word "Thon" again and again. The excitement subsided as quickly as it had arisen and after a few words of apology from Rethmar, the Professor proceeded with his discourse.

Margaret FitzGerald and I spent all the after-

*During the Year of the Visitation this difficulty was overcome and Zeeths now travel over every part of the world.

noon with Toron and Torona, sometimes reclining in their Zeeth and watching the glorious landscape unfolding below us, sometimes wandering through groves of cinnamon and nutmeg trees, sometimes resting in the crystal dwelling of our Deelathon friends.

Toron talked freely on all subjects and willingly told us everything we asked relating to the social and economic life of the people. One subject alone he avoided, and that the thing we most desired to know—the nature and meaning of the Thon.

We were amazed at the perfection of the Deelathon government and their commercial arrangements, but we were astounded at the extreme simplicity of the social machinery by which all their activities were controlled. Early in our friendship I asked Toron if we were correct in supposing that Torona was his wife. Toron looked puzzled for an instant and then replied:

"Yes and no, Clinton. When I first met you I selected the word 'companion' as better suited to explain our relationship than 'wife.' I feel a meaning in your word which is entirely foreign to our word."

"But Torona is not related to you, Toron?" I asked.

"No, except as my companion."

"You have chosen each other as mates?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, placing his hand gently on Torona's.

"Then surely," I went on, "you have been united by some ceremony such as that which we call marriage."

"No. That is the difference!" exclaimed Toron. "We have no ceremonies of any kind. What you call a ceremony is a form of words designed to make the listeners believe a falsehood or else to impress upon them something they are not sure of. Therefore, of course, we need no ceremonies."

I did not quite see where the "of course" came in, but I let that go and followed another line of thought.

"Then there is nothing to prevent you from separating from your companions, as you call them, at any time?"

"Nothing at all!" replied Toron, smiling radiantly at Torona.

"Then divorce must be exceedingly common among you, Toron," I said.

Toron and Torona both burst out laughing.

"As common as it is for the rose to divorce itself voluntarily from the tree," said Torona, "or the silver pathway on the lake to divorce itself from the moon."

Toron laughed again at the blank expression on our faces and said:

"Don't you see, Clinton, and you, Margaret, that all your ceremonies and divorces are necessary because you are not sure of yourselves. We Deelathon never make a mistake in our choice of a companion. In fact, as you will learn later, it is impossible for us to make a mistake. Therefore, when we choose a companion, it is forever."

Another time, as we were hovering over the wooded country in Torona's little Zeeth, Margaret commented on the curious fact that we had never seen any sign of burial grounds nor indeed had we so much as heard the word "death" mentioned.

Again Toron looked puzzled and then, as was his custom, replied by asking a seemingly irrelevant question.

"How old are you, Clinton?"

"Thirty-six," I answered.

"Years?" was Toron's curious question.

"Of course," I replied.

"I understand Margaret's question now," said Toron, his face bearing an expression as near sadness as it ever could. "Friends, does it surprise you that I, Toron, have seen over eight hundred summers and Torona over six hundred and fifty!"

"Surely, you jest, Toron!" I exclaimed. "No man can ever live to such an age!"

"And why not?" asked Toron.

"Because—Oh! because it's contrary to nature. Sickness and old age sap the wells of life and death comes, generally before a hundred years have passed."

"And we wondered at their unhappy faces, Toron!" exclaimed Torona. "Why, Margaret, there are many among the Deelathon who have lived not eight hundred but eight thousand years. We know what you mean by sickness, but no such thing exists among us. Neither have we anything which corresponds to your idea of old age. True, we leave our bodies, not because they are worn out, but because our appointed time has come. Oh friend! how can you do more than just taste the cup of life in so brief a space of time as one century?"

AND then came the afternoon when we were summoned to meet the Klendeela for the last time. Our speakers had concluded their addresses and Professor Smithton summed up their lectures in an eloquent speech in which he extolled the glories of the civilization of which we were the representatives.

For a brief interval there was silence and then Rethmar rose.

"Friends, accept the thanks of the Klendeela for your kindness. We have decided that the gift of the Thon shall be extended to you and through you to all the world. Tomorrow, if it shall please you, we will take you and all your company, both men and women, to the Thontara and there, in the presence of that undying wonder, we will reveal to you the secret of the Thon, which makes us what we are."

CHAPTER IV

The Glory of the Thontara

I NEED not tell you in detail, Benedict, with what excitement we awaited the coming of the day upon which we were at last to learn the meaning of the mysterious Thon. Everyone on the *Shah of Iran* had come to love and admire these strange people with their gentle, courteous ways, their radiant, happy faces, their wonderful health and almost divine beauty.

The sun rose in a clear sky for the first time for a week, as though to celebrate the beginning of a new era for mankind. Hundreds of Zeeths soared up from among the trees on the lake-shore and hovered over the steamer. One by one they dropped

to the deck and rose again with their quota of passengers.

At last the ship was deserted and the fleet of crystal spheres swooped away seaward, to land upon a grassy plain near the brink of the great waterfall. Rethmar led the way to the edge of the cliffs, at the point where the river gathered itself for the final plunge, and then we perceived a flight of steps cut in the solid rock.

We started down, each man or woman escorted by a friendly Deelathon; a company of over two thousand. Rethmar and the professor went first, then Margaret and Torona, followed by myself accompanied by Toron. As my turn came and I approached the top of the steps, I noticed that they did not terminate at the edge of the river, but entered instead, a hole in the rocks directly under the fall. I should have hesitated, but I caught sight of Margaret disappearing into the gloom and plucked up my courage to proceed.

A moment later I stood on a small platform. On my left was the cliff. On my right, and so close that I could have touched it, was a descending wall of water, thundering into the abyss.

The other four had disappeared and I looked questioningly at Toron. For answer, he took my hand and led me forward to the edge of the platform and then I realized with a thrill of horror that we stood on the top of one of the basalt columns and that the flight of steps continued spirally down it, being carved out of the solid rock. There was no railing of any kind and the idea of walking down that fearsome stairway with nothing but space and darkness below me and with millions of tons of water rushing by, turned me sick.

I glanced again at Toron and met his smile of encouragement. My fears departed and with his hand in mine, we started down. Round and round we circled, now passing close to the wall of water, whose roar grew ever louder as we descended; now passing through little tunnels which had been cut between the pillar and the cliff. Looking up, I could see a seemingly endless line of figures circling the mighty column and looking for all the world like the processionary caterpillars on the trunk of a pine tree, and once when I glanced hurriedly downward, I caught a glimpse of Margaret's dark hair and the gleam of Torona's pink body in the gloom.

At last, with a sigh of relief, I stepped from the bottom of the column to the floor of a great cave, like the famous Cave of the Winds under Niagara Falls. Margaret and the Professor, with the two Deelathon men, were awaiting us and we stood watching that silent line of figures creeping slowly downward, until we were once more united in the great cavity under the waterfall.

I thought our ordeal was over and that this must be the Thontara of which Rethmar had spoken. I was wondering how it would be possible for him to reveal any secret to us in a place where the bellow of the waters would drown any attempt at speech. But as the thought entered my mind I saw Rethmar drawing the Professor forward and they began to descend another flight of steps, cut like the other in the solid rock.

Following Margaret and Torona, I found that this stairway ran sharply down into a tunnel which seemed to lead us directly under the fall. The passage was so low that I could touch the roof with my hand and feel the living rock trembling with the tremendous impact of the water.

Still we descended and I saw a faint flicker of light below me, growing ever brighter and brighter. A hundred more steps brought us to the bottom, and passing through an arched opening, we stood at last in the Thontara.

At the glory of the sight that met my eyes, I uttered an involuntary cry of amazement and delight. We stood on the edge of a great circular depression, which I judged to be about a thousand feet in diameter. Surrounding this depression was the broad shelf of black basalt on which we were standing, and filling the entire area within this shelf, was a mass of colored light which surged and rippled like a sea of rainbows. I have spoken of the varied hues which were visible on the surface of the crystal Zeeths. This was the same but intensified a thousand-fold.

As my eyes became accustomed to the light I realized that we were standing on the border of a vast circular floor of crystal, so exquisitely transparent that it was like gazing into a bottomless pit of lucent flame. It was long before I could turn my eyes from that sea of fire and look upward, but when at last I did so, I was greeted by a new wonder.

I WAS looking at the under side of the great dome of water which occupied the centre of the pool below the waterfall! This living roof of liquid, seeming as frail as a bubble and yet weighing under normal conditions no one knows how many thousand tons, was bereft of its weight by the screening effect of the crystal and hung in mid-air, motionless and yet in constant motion under the tremendous force of the cataract, its under surface reflecting, as though in a mirror, the splendor of the sea of colored light below.

While I had been absorbing the beauty of this natural kaleidoscope, the rocky shelf had been filling with our great company until we were all assembled in the Thontara. Rethmar and the Professor had gone to the farther side and I saw the Deelathon raise his hand in salute and prepare to speak.

The roar of the waterfall was almost inaudible and was replaced by a soft hissing produced by the rapid movement of the liquid roof. As Rethmar began to speak, his voice penetrated to every corner of the immense space, reflected from the dome by some strange acoustic effect like that sometimes heard in old cathedrals.

"Friends from beyond the sea," he said, "we have brought you to this place which we call the Thontara, because it seemed the most fitting spot in which to reveal to you the secret of the Thon. You cannot have failed to understand that this Thon, which is so mysterious to you, is regarded by us as the greatest gift in the possession of man. Our language alone would reveal this to you. We call ourselves the Deelathon, 'People of the Thon.' This living frill upon our heads is the Thonmelek, 'Mirror of the Thon.' And this glory that you behold is the Thontara, 'Place of the Thon.' Now, there-

fore, before revealing to you the meaning of this word, we ask you to tell us what you have guessed the Thon to be."

"Truly, we have wondered, Rethmar," said the Professor. "Some thought it was the god you worship. Miss FitzGerald imagined that it stood for Intuition and I guessed it might be Truth."

"In a measure you are all right," said Rethmar, "and yet you have but touched on the fringe of the matter. Listen and I will reveal to you all, the secret of this mystery. The Thon is the Power of Life. It is the essence which separates the living from the dead, the animate from the inanimate, the man from the animal and the plant from the stone. Through the Thon, we, the Deelathon, are what we are."

"We hear your words and they are good, Rethmar," said the Professor, "but we do not yet understand how the Thon can benefit us."

"Listen again," said Rethmar. "You have told us of the outer world in which you live and we are grieved at your story. You claim credit for the conquest of Nature, but it is Nature which has conquered you. You boast of the perfection of your civilization, but you are the slaves of that civilization you have created. There is hardly anything in science which you have told us that we have not known for centuries, but we use our knowledge instead of permitting our knowledge to use us. In spite of your fancied attainments, you are in bondage to three masters: sorrow, sickness and death, and yet the key to unlock your bonds is all around you. Nay, more. You, Smithton, have told us that you have known the Thon for forty years and have not recognized it for what it is!"

"I!" exclaimed the Professor. "I told you that?"

"You told us," repeated Rethmar, "at the third meeting of the Klendeela, that forty years ago one of your wise men* discovered a power that penetrated the densest metals, a power of which he could not discover the origin, a power which he called the Cosmic Ray. This, Friends, is the Thon!

"Make no mistake!" he went on. "We do not worship the Thon. One of you has told us how in ancient times men worshipped the Sun, the Source of Light. But we worship the one God, whom no man may know. As for the Thon, we know not whence it comes, we only know it fills all space and permeates all things. We know that it is a form of wave motion like light, but whereas light is reflected by material things, the Thon is reflected by the mind and spirit of all that lives. Therefore, I have called it the Power of Life.

"You have spoken with pride of your elaborate system of laws, your multiplex religions, your social ceremonials, your great battles in which millions grapple to the death. Friends, are you so blind that you cannot see that all these things are bred of misunderstanding, misunderstanding of yourselves, of each other, of the living universe of which you are a part? Can you conceive of fighting those you call your enemies if each side could see the other's viewpoint as clearly as his own?

*Dr. Robert A. Milliken.

"I HAVE said that the Thon is a form of vibration which responds to the life-form or spirit of living things. By virtue of the Thon, one mind beholds another, just as the material eye beholds other material bodies by virtue of reflected light. Thus it is that misunderstanding is impossible among us. Thus it is that we are able to understand you when you speak your own language. Thus it is that we need no such laws and ceremonies and social machinery as that of which you boast. And thus it is that we enjoy perfect health and happiness because we see, not only the outer shell as you do, but also the living mind that resides within the shell, as you would say."

"But tell us, Rethmar," said the Professor, "if you thus see the mind within the body, why is speech necessary, since your thoughts must be visible to one another?"

"First let me say, Smithton, that the mind is not within the body, but the body within the mind. As to your question, it is a reasonable one and we ourselves do not fully understand why it is not as you say. It seems, however, that the spoken word is necessary as the vehicle of thought, with us as with you. But note the difference; when you speak, your thought must go through many translations before reaching the mind of the hearer, losing some of its sense with each translation. First you must mentally select the words best fitted to express your idea. Then your organs of speech must convert those words into vibrations of sound, which in turn must act upon the ears of your hearer and be turned into the nerve-force which reacts upon the brain. Here the word-sounds must be converted into word-pictures.

"Is it any wonder that the thought of the speaker reaches the brain of the listener in a mangled condition? And it matters not whether the words be true or false, the hearer cannot distinguish between them. But with us, the spoken word is simply the means by which the speaker reveals his thought to the hearer. No matter how imperfectly the words may have been selected, the hearer sees by the reflected rays of the Thon, the actual thought of the speaker. I use the word 'sees,' but of course we do not see the Thon with the eye, but with an intangible organ of the mind."

"It comes to us as a great surprise," said the Professor, "that the Thon of which we have heard so much, should be the medium of a sixth sense and should be none other than the Cosmic Ray, with which we are familiar. We can easily realize that a people who live under such conditions must be the happiest people in the world. But when you offer us the gift of the Thon, Rethmar, you seem to forget that we lack this special faculty which enables you to visualize the mental images produced by the Thon. You may tell a blind man of the light, but you cannot make him see."

"Oh, Smithton! Smithton! do you still fail to understand?" said Rethmar, and his voice rang out like a bugle call to every one of the great circle of listeners. "This special faculty, as you call it, is not the exclusive possession of the Deelathon. It is common to all mankind. It is a part of every living thing. It is inherent in Life itself. Oh! Friends from beyond the sea, you are not by nature

blind to the Thon. For countless generations you and all your race have lived and died like men who bandage their eyes that they may not see the light!

"For the last time, *listen!*"

And then, in words so simple that the humblest trimmer among the crew could understand, Rethmar revealed to us the secret which gave us full possession of that marvellous sixth sense: the consciousness of the Thon.

You, Benedict, and all your generation, were born with this sense fully developed and you can hardly realize what stupendous emotions convulsed us when, to use Rethmar's simile, the bandages were torn from the eyes of our minds and we saw ourselves and our friends and all living things, face to face in the light of the Thon. To you, your consciousness of the Thon is as natural and commonplace as your consciousness of light or sound, but to us it came as an overpowering revelation.

Speaking for myself, for a space my mind was dazzled as the eyes of a blind man are dazzled when he first receives his sight. When this temporary confusion passed, my first thought was of Margaret FitzGerald.

We had been drawn together in friendship during our strange adventures. I had thought her beautiful and womanly, but no word of love had passed my lips. Now, as her eyes met mine, I saw revealed a beauty of spirit and intellect such as I scarcely dreamed could exist. Her face was radiant with happiness but her soul was calm with the peace of eternity.

No word was spoken. No word was needed. The revealing rays of the Thon told us beyond the possibility of misunderstanding that we were Companions. A moment later our arms were around each other and in the presence of that great company we gave and received our first kiss.

And in the light of the Thon we realized the literal truth of the poet's words:

> "Our Spirits rushed together,
> At the meeting of the lips."

THERE is little more to be told. With her hand in mine I led Margaret across the great crystal floor, walking as though in a sea of prismatic flame to where Rethmar stood.

"Rethmar and Toron. Men and Women of the Deelathon," I said, "Margaret, my dear Companion and I, thank you in the name of all this company for your great gift. Now we ask a further favor, knowing that it will be granted, that we may go back into our world and teach our unhappy fellow men to see. I even venture to beg that some few of your people will accompany us to lighten our task, for none can fail to understand the meaning of the Thon when the secret is revealed by a Deelathon."

Rethmar's face was but a faint reflection of the radiance of his spirit. Raising his hand in the Deelathon salute, he cried:

"You have heard the request of our friends, Clinton and Margaret, now Companions by the Thon. Who will go with them?"

And a thousand arms flashed up in the salute and a thousand voices rang out in the words now as intelligible to us as English:

"Zo thana!—I will go!"

"All cannot go," said Rethmar. "Toron and Torona shall, with a company of one hundred, go with you on your ship. One thing alone we ask; that the place of the Deelathon shall remain a secret until you are sure that no harm shall come to our country. You have a saying that it is foolish to cast pearls before swine. Who knows what might happen when the Thon is revealed to all men?"

And there, in the pulsing splendor of the Thontara, we, the passengers and crew of the *Shah of Iran*, swore the oath of secrecy which we have kept to this hour.

Three days later the great liner was lifted from the lake to the blue waters of the Pacific, outside the barrier reef. A whirling cloud of Zeeths hovered and darted above us as our screws began to churn the water. The equatorial windows were crowded with Deelathon waving a last salute to the brave hundred upon our decks who, alas! were destined never to return.

Presently we passed the boundaries of the basalt rock and the Zeeths were forced to turn back, having reached what was then the limit of their range. Our course was laid to the North and a pathway of foam fled in our wake as we commenced the last voyage which was to bring happiness and health and understanding to the World—the Voyage of the Visitation.

Afterword

The sun was high in the heavens when Captain Clinton concluded his narrative. We rose from our seat on the bare summit of the Shah and without a word began our descent.

And now I, Benedict Clinton, have completed the task assigned to me by my great-grandfather a year ago. The story of the Year of the Visitation is known to all the world, even if its effects were not visible on every side today.

And yet a visitor from another planet could hardly have blamed the Deelathon for their caution lest the gift of the Thon should bring about a revolution which would convulse the world and overwhelm their tiny country in its flood.

Actually, nothing in the nature of a revolution took place. The new order was so entirely natural, so utterly sane, that the change took place everywhere, almost without our being aware of it.

There was no wholesale abolition of laws and governments. We simply ceased to use them as men discard a worn-out garment. There was no deliberate disarmament. Nations ceased to go to war because there were no nations any longer. Cruisers and battleships, armored cars and guns lay rotting and rusting where they had been abandoned. In the light of the new understanding, racial and national divisions ceased to have any meaning, although we have retained many of the geographical names for the sake of convenience.

People everywhere found a marvellous increase in health and happiness as the direct result of the knowledge of sane living, which was revealed by the Thon, but the seed of death was in them and they, the Epzykofs, are passing away from among

us year by year. Not so with the generations yet unborn at the date of the Visitation. We, the Zykofs, enjoy the same perfection of bodily and mental well-being that my great-grandfather found among the Deelathon and we know of no limit to our lives, save the call of destiny.

And what of Toron and Torona and the hundred whom they led to our deliverance? They came forth voluntarily from a country of undying beauty, to bring the greatest of all natural gifts to the World, and in so doing, perished! Utterly unfitted physically to cope with the misery and disease and death which they came to eradicate, they faded, sickened and died in the accomplishment of their great task. Before the year had passed away, not one of that splendid band was left!

FAR out in the Pacific is a barren island of magnetic iron oxide, the remnant of the great meteor and above its highest point towers a mighty spire of imperishable crystal. Its prismatic efflorescence is visible at night for many miles and upon its base is the inscription:

"TO THE VISITANTS"

THE END.

A REMARKABLE DRAWING

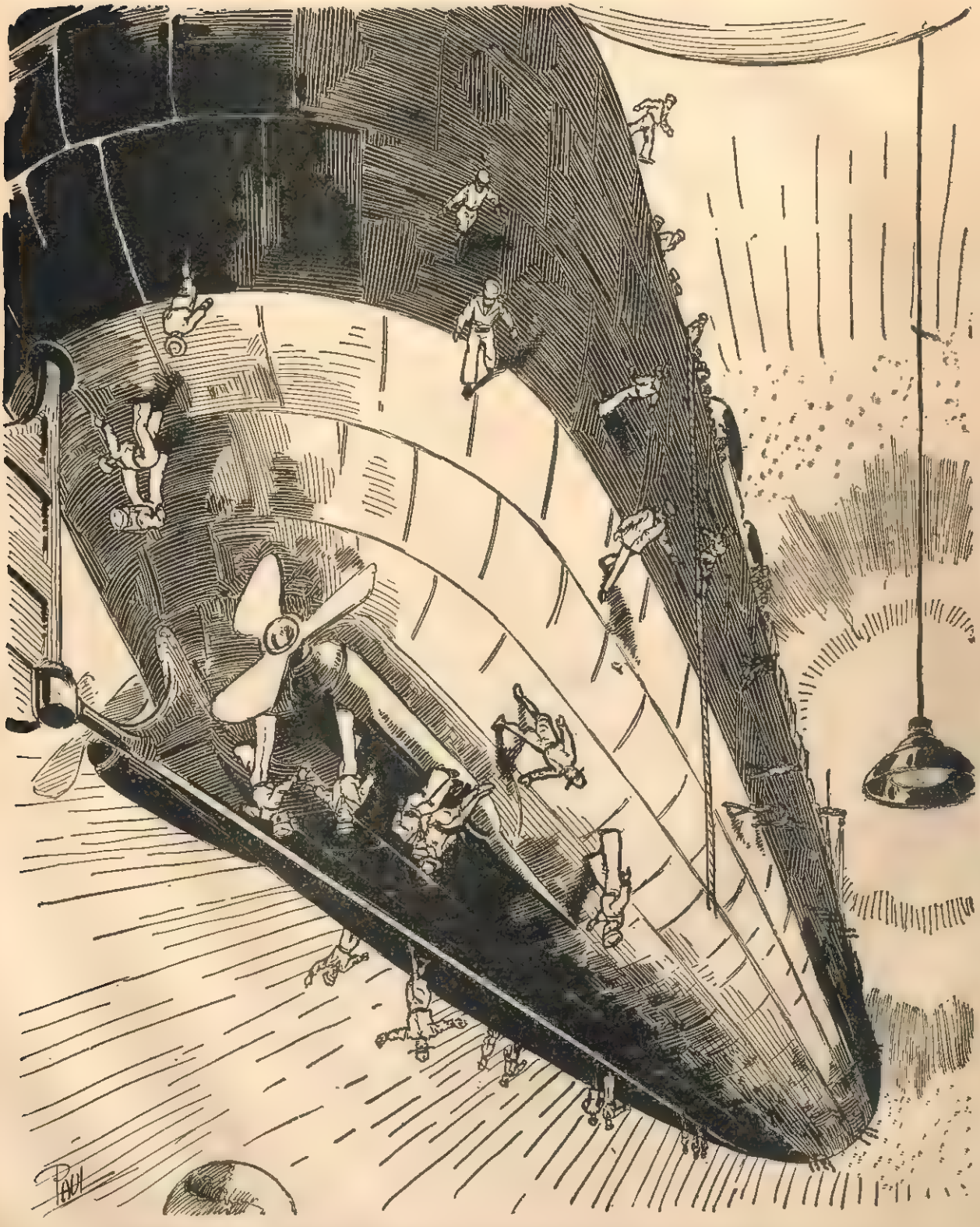
By J. M. de ARAGON

IGNORANCE, FANATICISM AND CRUELTY

The three prediluvian monsters—man's soul eaters that, though slowly shrinking from the few and feeble attacks of poor humanity, still loom large over the entrance to the temple of human happiness.

The ELECTRONIC WALL

By Geo. R. Fox



. . . But after the chief officers themselves had gone over and reported that they had walked about the ship's bottom with feet up and heads down, and could jump no further than one could leap up from the deck, everyone agreed that something far outside the pale of human understanding had occurred.

Second Prize Winner in the $500 Prize Cover Contest

Second Prize of $150.00 awarded to Geo. R. Fox, Three Oaks, Michigan, for *"The Electronic Wall."*

THE ELECTRONIC WALL

By GEO. R. FOX

WHEN I set out to record this historical event in which I had some part, I almost overlooked my scrap-books. Oh, I admit that the possession of a "scrap-book" in this age when time and need for such compilation no longer exists, marks the possessor as hopelessly *passé*. But I no longer make them. With the exception of three items clipped this year, 2038, my scrap-books were filled before I was twenty years of age. As I now am in my one hundred and twentieth year, it is plainly evident that one hundred years have passed since I pasted the last clipping.

My first scrap-book was begun through the influence of my grandfather. While I was but a lad he made me familiar with the same type of book kept by his father, Jedidiah Prindle, who was one of the pioneers in the then new state of Wisconsin, settling in the wilderness of the Fox River Valley in 1849.

To Grandfather Prindle, his father's book, measuring as it did events in a past which grandfather had come to look upon as a golden age, was "treasure." And I saw it with his eyes. In emulation, I cut and pasted; purposeless then, invaluable now.

When my friend, Editor Jernseck, alone among publishers, threw open to my story the platform of his visualaud* magazine, I was elated, yet worried.

"Jernseck," I told him, "my tale is almost incredible; and worse yet, corroborative evidence is lacking."

"Randall Prindle, *I* believe you," he rejoined with quiet emphasis. "Even did I doubt, still never shall it be said that this great magazine, founded by my grandfather, shall be closed to scientific statements, though actual proof is lacking, if that statement is in accord with the scientific knowledge of the day, and is capable of being considered a probability rather than a possibility."

After this expression of confidence, I racked my mind for proofs. Almost hopeless, I was about to give up when from the depths of my memory, I dragged the thought of my scrap-books. Verification!—There I found it, or at least references from the news columns and scientific journals of those years, that point the truth of the beginning of my story. I can vindicate Jernseck's faith in my credibility.

The first clipping goes back to 1925. This I mounted some years after it was printed. Of several covering the same subject, this from my scrap-book is from *The Magazine of Science*, official publication of the American Society of Scientific Progress. The weight of this organization is behind its utterances.

ARE WE GOING TO HAVE A NEW MOON?
DR. BAADE'S DISCOVERY CALLS ATTENTION TO OUR SECOND MOON

Washington, D. C., Jan. 3, 1925.—Dr. Baade of Hamburg University reported on October 27 that, in the constellation Pegasus, he had seen a new object of the tenth magnitude and planetary in aspect, but travelling at terrific speed.

Yerkes Observatory photographed the body. Prof. Frost says it is invisible to the naked eye, as is the miniature moon suspected of accompanying the earth. Astronomers likewise have yet to catch a first glimpse of it. They estimate its speed at three and a half miles a second and think it has a diameter of about 400 feet.

Will the earth capture Dr. Baade's heavenly body as it did the minor moon? Scientists believe it will pass us so closely that it will be deflected from its original path and become our third satellite.

Other clippings, mostly from newspapers, made light of the discovery. After a few months it dropped out of public attention. Why, if the body was captured, did no one find it later? And why, if it came as close as predicted, did not the camera pick it up? Or catch a glimpse of the supposed second moon? Probably the story I have dug out of my old scrap-book is not today remembered or known to a single living person outside myself. Yet this has a bearing on my narrative.

The second clipping to be quoted does not come from my scrap-book. With the book as a guide, I dug up three items from the files of *The Chicago*

THE second prize-winning story was selected chiefly because of the excellent science contained in it and the plausible manner in which the entire story is developed. The plot in this story is excellent and, as we have said elsewhere, you will be surprised to see that you can read all seven prize-winning stories and enjoy them, although you might at first think that there would necessarily be much duplication in the several plots. This, however, you will speedily discover, is not so.

*This word is compounded from "visual" and "auditory."

Union. These appeared in the three issues just preceding its seizure by the government. The *Union* and the labor unions back of it were firm believers in peace, and bitterly opposed the use of war to settle disputes between nations. At the breaking out of the second World War, the paper openly opposed the government's policy and counselled resistance to the draft. Because of the vast numbers behind the *Union*, the powers at Washington thought it wise to ignore this, but when the paper openly published the loss of the *Woodrow Wilson*, they proceeded under the law which specified an "Act, giving aid and comfort to the enemy." This suppression was ill-advised to say the least, for even then the radio was so extensively used that almost every home was already apprized of the ship's disappearance. The reactionaries and conservatives of that day could not learn, and refused to realize, even as do those of the present era, that the most efficient agents in spreading radical ideas were not the propaganda of the discontented, but their own acts of injustice and oppression.

I CHOOSE the first of the three clippings. The others are further verifications of the facts set down in the one here reproduced in part.

THE WOODROW WILSON LOST
SHIP WITH 15,000 TROOPS AND 1,200 SAILORS VANISHES

New York, May 2, 1938.—The *Woodrow Wilson* with all on board is lost. The transport with 15,000 troops, part of the third contingent being sent to Mesopotamia, and crew of 1,200 has disappeared. The Navy Department refuses to discuss the mystery.

It is known that airships flying over the route taken by the ship report no small boats or signs of wreckage. On wireless inquiry of its correspondents in all ports at which the *Woodrow Wilson* might touch, the *Union* learns that she has not been seen. Where is the ship?

The *Woodrow Wilson* was a nine hundred foot vessel. She sailed on April 15 and was due to reach the Persian Gulf on April 23. Ordinarily a four day run, the closing of the Suez Canal and the holding of adjacent territory by the Franco-Italian allies, make the trip by the way of the Cape of Good Hope necessary. When last heard from, the ship was southeast of Hatteras Light, the radio station there being in constant communication with her up to seven-thirty of the evening the ship sailed. At that hour she reported everything O. K. Then—silence. Not a word has come through since.

We ask again, where is the *Woodrow Wilson?*

We answer, at the bottom of the sea with 18,000 of our finest young men; and all because of the incredible stupidity and venal subservience to our millionaires of the officials at Washington.——

The article concluded with a diatribe against the American Party, then in control of the political machinery of the nation.

The last of my references is from the visualaud of Sept. 15, 2038. Doubtless, most of you heard of and saw the ship.

> The mystery of the disappearance of the *Woodrow Wilson* is solved. But the mystery of what became of her human freight is as great as ever. The ship, which vanished from sight on April 15, 1938, was discovered three days ago in the Victoria desert three hundred miles west of Ouidabinna, South Australia, and is as you can see in as good shape as when she sailed out of Newport News one hundred years ago. Dr. Corbeth, who made the find, asserts that no sign of life was found on board her. Her boats all were in place but no food or water was on board; neither were there the personal belongings of the troops or sailors, although the arms of the former were not touched. You can see them in the racks as left. Where has she been? How did she reach this place 500 miles from the sea? Why have none of the exploring parties who passed through the desert in 1952 and again in 1989 sighted her? You see she lies on an even keel on a level sand plain, visible for miles. Who will solve the mystery?

OF men on earth today, I alone can give the complete solution. I know what happened to the *Woodrow Wilson*. For I was one of the fifteen thousand troops on that vessel when she left; and I was on her when she grounded in the Victoria Desert.

We sailed out of Newport News aflame with enthusiasm and confident that with our knowledge and abilities, once we reached the plains about Bagdad, the seat of war, the struggle would be over and our America triumphant.

For we were picked men, young but tried workers in scientific fields. I had specialized on atomic structure until at that time, I thought I knew all there was to know. Remember, in extenuation of my conceit, that I was then but twenty.

Distinctions of rank not then having been abolished, I found myself quartered with three other sergeants, in a small cabin on the main-deck.

The *Woodrow Wilson* was one of a fleet of forty-seven vessels, but by far the largest and fastest. Unescorted, for our government had not then a single fighting ship, we were twenty miles out before we picked up the first scout-plane. From then on we knew we would find our route patrolled by these giant air-cruisers.

I suspect that Captain Blucher was under orders to drive the ship at top speed the entire distance; certainly he showed no concern about keeping with the other units of the fleet. We left harbor at six in the morning; by noon not a single transport was in sight; by night we were far south of the latitude of the Carolina Capes, miles out and driving southeast through a solitary sea. Our speed was sixty-seven knots, a clip our internal combustion turbo-electrics could maintain for forty days without a stop for fuel.

As I came up on deck that evening there was no ship, no plane, no land in sight. This pleased me. I was lonesome and wanted to be off alone and lonely.

My room-mates were fine fellows. My closest friend on board, "Slim" Essinger was my bunkmate. "Slim" was a psychologist; he really was an expert on mind, mind-control and mind-reading. Even in those days mental science was well begun. So there was no need for me to be lonesome.

But I was. Not only lonesome but sad and depressed as well—sorrowing for Lonnie Dove. I wanted Lonnie, every cell of my being called for her. I could almost still feel her kisses, fresh on my lips. But I wanted more, much more. It was her physical presence for which I yearned.

As I then knew love, I was wholly, hopelessly in love with her. I failed to recognize in the passionate desire to hold her in my arms, the physical basis of my love. Now I can see that the "purity" of my love was but the obsession of a closed mind, physical calling to the physical as the primitive in man surges perilously close to the surface.

I yearned to whisper my longings, to hear in response, her breathing of "I love you, I love you." Oh for loneliness for her and me; a desert isle, a cavern at the bottom of the sea, anywhere that we might be together; together and alone. Alone—yes, even in my thoughts of her.

I found a sheltered corner by the rail on the boat deck. There I stood and dreamed, I do not know how long. Certainly not more than an hour, for, although darkness had fallen, taps was not yet sounded.

I was alone, even the officer in charge had left the bridge for the shelter of the pilothouse. I leaned against a stanchion gazing off across the sea to the horizon still sharply cut in the lingering light of early evening. Above, not a cloud in the sky. Then something in the air ahead and high up attracted my wandering attention. Were it not for what happened afterward, I might question the truth of the vision. I had time to sense that it wasn't one of our planes, for it was moving toward us at terrific speed. It impressed me as being round, not at all like the shape of a plane.

Then we plunged into fog. At the time I failed to realize the peculiarity of this. Subconsciously I had noted the broad sea, the clear sky; no suggestion of vapor. Yet of a sudden I glanced up and before I could look down the ship was enveloped in the mist.

It wasn't particularly dense. I could see to the bow and to the stern, and to the water below. I noted that the officer on watch came out on a run to the port end of the bridge. I saw his hand rest on a lever and at once there boomed out the siren in the fog signal. Foolish, I thought, if enemies are about. Yet if enemy aircraft were near, our scouts would know.

I remember rather rejoicing about the fog; in my present mood it was welcome; it shut me in with my thoughts of Lonnie. A pleasant shiver of loneliness passed over me. I gazed down at the rushing water, which suddenly seemed to be getting farther and farther away. I rubbed my eyes to brush away the webs; even then came a whirring roar and the vessel quivered from stem to stern. I heard the officer shout into a speaking tube, and the noise died at once. I had enough of sea experience to recognize the noise for what it was, the racing of the propellers. Often in heavy seas, they are rolled out; then it is the engineer's duty to throttle down the engine before the machinery can jerk itself to pieces by the high speed.

With amaze written in every line of his figure, the officer stood looking toward where the sea ought to be. But no longer was it visible. "What in blankety blank has happened?" With quick decision I saw him seize an iron pin from the rack and hurl it outward, listening. And the pin—didn't drop It merely shot out a short distance, then as though tied to a cord, came dashing back, striking the ship and coming to rest on the hull a few feet below the deck. I was dumbfounded. As for the officer, he slipped out his watch, examined it in the light of a small lamp on the bridge, and swore. Later "Slim" told me that it is a result of nervous shock, motivated exactly as that which in a woman leads to tears.

By this time the bugles were sounding "assembly," and the decks were filling with officers and soldiers. Something had happened and until it was known how serious it might be, no chances were being taken. I hastened off to my station, assigned before boarding the ship, and there met my squad.

AS far as I could see the men were calm, taking it as a special drill. There was no sign of danger. The boat was still, even the vibrations of the engines were absent; we rode on an even keel and save for the fog which hemmed us in, might have been lying at our dock. All perfectly normal—and yet, a something above us; and an iron belaying pin clinging to the side of the ship.

Doubtless conferences among officers were being held in all parts of the ship. My position with my squad, at the forward doors of the upper deck, almost beneath the starboard bridge, enabled me to hear much that was said by Captain Blucher and others of the ship's officers.

"—— pumps won't work," the officer of the watch was saying as he and the Captain came out on the bridge.

"Is he asking for time to repair them?" the Captain asked.

"No, sir. Mr. MacDee reports they turn but don't pump."

"The auxiliary pumps?"

"Don't work either, sir."

"I'll talk to him." The Captain turned to a speaking-tube. "Mr. MacDee," he called. MacDee was our chief engineer.

"What's this about your pumps?" The Captain was short; pumps were in the engineer's department; MacDee was responsible.

"What's that?"

"The ashes are back?"

"What? . . . Nonsense . . . Certainly we're afloat? Where did you think we are! . . . No! Not a chance of it. . . . No." Captain Blucher turned and walked to the end of the bridge. He gazed down, then beckened to his First Officer.

"Mr. Steen, look down. You see the sea? No? Fog hides it?"

"No, sir." The mate leaned far out and pointed down. "The hull, far below the waterline is visible. But—no water."

Just as the Captain himself was leaning out, the radio-man came up to my station. "I must see the Captain," he said. I saluted and passed him up on to the bridge.

"Well?" I saw the Captain turn to meet him.

"I have to report, sir, that since we entered the fog, no messages have been received."

"Broken down?"

"No, sir. Every test has been made. Nor can we send."

"Are we bewitched?" The Captain was turning away as the explosive utterance unconsciously burst forth, forced by his load of responsibility—his to meet the emergency.

That night was a busy one for the ship's crew. As for the troops, it was not long before the tension relaxed and events were accepted as a matter of course; about midnight they were sent back to quarters.

My squad was one of those kept on guard duty so that I was able to see many of the efforts made to ascertain where we were, and what was happening. Captain Blucher and our commander, General Waksheh, exhausted every means. Even when the sailors sent down by rope to investigate came up and reported that they could pass under the hull, that there was not a sign of the sea, the officers still persisted with rockets and every other thinkable means of communication, to reach one of our aircraft. The story the men told of being unable to leave the ship, at first was given scant attention. To believe that one could not drop from the deck rail was asking too much. But after the chief officers themselves had gone over and reported on return that they had walked about the ship's bottom with feet up and heads down, and could jump down no further than one could leap up from the deck, everyone agreed that something far outside the pale of human understanding had occurred. I recalled the belaying-pin, and the Captain's exclamation, "The ashes are back!"

One unusual accident occurred during the night. A sentry, thinking he saw something off in the fog, fired at it. Captain Green, in deck charge, came up on the run. No more had he reached the man under his command, than he fell, his right leg broken by a bullet. A scurry to take shelter from the enemy, and then the waiting. Minutes passed. No report was heard, and no more missiles were received.

Captain Green was carried to the hospital. The bullet, when removed, was found to be identical with those served to the men. The small-arms experts unhesitatingly pronounced it the very bullet discharged from the soldier's rifle.

That only made the mystery the greater, for many seconds had elapsed after the report of the gun, before the officer was wounded. After more figuring the experts announced that if the gun had been pointed straight up, the bullet was due to fall again at about the time the officer was struck. That sounded well, but the soldier swore positively that he had not pointed the gun away from the vessel, but toward the heavens. Captain Green was sarcastically as positive that he had not held his leg out at right angles from his body, the only position in which it might be struck and broken by a falling bullet.

We did not appear to be in the slightest danger. The ship rode on an even keel without motion of any sort. There was no breeze and the fog hung about us without movement. Of sounds, other than those originating on the ship, we heard none. The gulls which had followed us from Newport News had disappeared.

The radio was tried again and again, with no results save that the private sets on board picked up the signals without difficulty. Toward evening of the second day, the staff officers decided to try telepathy, which was new at that time and therefore created much opposition. Those favoring the attempt argued that there was nothing to lose, and telepathy being in "Slim" Essinger's department, he was sent for.

SO great was the advance in mental science up to the breaking out of the War of 1938, that before we sailed, some of the younger and more progressive men in the War Department made preparation for the use of thought transference. All officers, both those retained at Washington, and those despatched, were carefully tested. The minds of all were tuned as to rhythmicity, synchronism and harmony. In the trials even when the distance between attuned minds had been three thousand miles, reception and dispatch of thought had been a success. At the test both radio and wires were at hand for checking the accuracy; here—no matter what "Slim" might say, it would be through him, and his own words.

He didn't say a thing. The effort ended in failure. He tried to send, but reported that he sensed opposition; and he could get no return.

Some hours later we four sergeants were sitting on the edges of our bunks speculating on where we were. We had been a little south of the Bermudas when the engines stopped. I contended that the winds would blow us back on the Carolina coast. "Slim" was arguing that we'd drift south when suddenly he stopped.

"Ran," he called to me. "Take me to General Waksheh. Something is coming through." In the days when telepathy was being mastered, concentration was a prime requisite. That "Slim" might utilize every faculty, I tucked his hand under my arm and started for the General's quarters. "It is very faint. I don't get it plain, yet," "Slim" told me as we set out.

I saluted and when the General asked what I had to report, explained that "Slim" was getting a message by telepathy. General Waksheh turned his attention to the human instrument, waiting in some curiosity, I imagined. In a few minutes my friend began to talk. Sharp and distinct were his words, but the voice was not that of "Slim" Essinger.

"Order every man on board out on deck. Fear nothing. No action is contemplated against yourselves or the ship. You will be unharmed. Gather every man; my message is for all." Then in his own tones he added to me, "Lead me out on the bridge."

It sounded like an enemy. Yet it was but a sergeant talking. Many an officer on the General's

staff looked his horror. But the General was one who foresaw the change from the control of an oligarchy of wealth and position, to a real democracy, and he could concede the possibility of a "non-com" having an idea. Besides, if "Slim" was faking—time enough to consider that, later. But in the unusual position in which we were, even a command such as this was worth heeding. We were ordered to the upper decks. Even Captain Green with his broken limb, was carried up on a stretcher.

"Dismiss every fear from your mind," were the first words to us as we stood assembled. The Voice that spoke was loud and distinct carrying to every part of the decks. Yet in the softness and sweetness of the tone was an authority and friendliness that begot confidence. The Voice went on.

"No harm is to come to anyone on this ship. On the contrary, each has been signally honored, as fit for the most important duty that can devolve upon members of humanity. The journey you are being taken on will last approximately three hundred of your hours, from the time your trip began. Within thirty hours the fog will clear. When you realize your position, take joy in the view and have no fear. No man will have seen the like before, so remember our promise to you. We come not as enemies but as friends. Again I ask, have confidence in us. Your reward will be great. You now are to return to your duties and your places. I have nothing more to communicate at this time."

AS I consider what was told us, and the little really offered, I marvel at the confidence we manifested in the promises. I can account for it only by believing that the Voice was hypnotic; this power of the human voice is not yet established to the satisfaction of science, yet I venture that within another generation, or by 2150 at the latest, it will be acknowledged.

The mathematically inclined on board began working out destinations. Postulating a speed equivalent to the *Woodrow Wilson's* best, they told us that in three hundred hours we would have travelled nearly around the world. Checking on a chart with this distance as a radius, got us nowhere, unless we were being led on the grand tour with our destination, San Francisco.

Others speculated on the "view no man had seen before." As our world had been pretty well explored by the year 1938, it didn't seem to mean much unless the old time hollow globe theory was correct and we were being led up to the open pole and down inside our earth—as preposterous a supposition, it seemed, as to suppose that the heavens above were solid with doors and windows, as in the cosmogony of the Jews of Moses' time, and before, and to suppose that we were being hauled up through an open port into the vault above.

Friendly curiosity was in possession of our ship. Even officers of the old school of the first World War, and its peculiar ideas of men's relationships, were animated by a democratic courtesy formerly not noticeable.

Twenty-four hours passed. The fog still held. All had been intent for a happening for the first few hours. The watch became less close as time went on. Four hours later and a rush of feet on the planking above our heads apprized us that something was going on. My own conclusion, of course, was that the fog was lifting. Shouting to "Slim," "Come on. It's clearing," I dashed out on the main-deck.

Everyone was crowding the rail to look out across the sea. And—there was no sea. We were alone in a great void. In the distance glared a fiery ball, which I knew for the sun. Of the earth or the moon, I could see nothing. Yet that is not entirely true, for off at one side was a small round object which seemed about an inch in diameter and near it was a bright speck. The telescopes on board resolved the larger into our earth, for they revealed the continents distinctly, and the speck into the earth's satellite—our moon. But just then we were paying no attention to the planet we had left. All hands were raised to point overhead, while their owners cried, "Look." "There it is." "What is it?" and a multitude of other exclamations,

"It" was the round thing of my evening experience. Though I had secured but a glance, I recognized it immediately; and now it was revealed in all its details. It was slightly greater in diameter than the length of our ship; nine hundred and sixty-three feet triangulation revealed as the correct length from pole to pole. It revolved slowly on an axis formed by these poles which indeed were projections such as one might expect to find on a globe built to revolve on a fixed support. As we afterwards learned, these were the work of the inhabitants of "Paulo" as they called their world. The real purpose of these projecting parts had nothing to do with the turning of the globe, but were electrically combined with an electronic element not yet mastered on earth.

The poles were a coppery red, a rarified and perfected element akin to our copper. A median belt or equatorial region was also constructed of the same material, segmented, with an opening like an insect's eye, in the center of each segment. The globe itself was a shimmering white, shading into the yellow of the spectrum; it had an appearance such as a mirror in constant violent motion might present.

Slowly turning, at a distance of not over a thousand feet, the orb hung above us. As though we were the sun and it the earth, its axis had an inclination somewhat greater than that of our world to the central body. The purpose of this inclination was to cut lines of force most effectively, as they were sent from the little world to our ship. It was this that saved us. Out there in space our ship would almost instantly have been stripped of heat and air. The *Woodrow Wilson* would have become a gigantic tomb floating in space.

"Floating" did I say? Hardly that. Depending from both poles of the odd planetoid, were lines or filaments, supporting above our bow and stern, two bell-shaped objects of the coppery mineral. About each of these clung, and continued to cling, all during our trip, the haze or fog that had enveloped us.

As these never varied from their positions with reference to the ship, our first conclusions were that they supported it. Yet logic told me, and doubtless the others—I know "Slim" noticed it—that this could not be. Ships are built with the idea that

the pressure of water helps stiffen them and hold their plates or planks in place. A great liner lifted from the water and placed on supports, one at each end, would crumple and collapse. Tremendous truss-work would be needed if the weight at the center were to be supported. Yet here was the *Woodrow Wilson* apparently held; and she did not break. Several possibilities offered an explanation. One was that out here in space, millions of miles from our world, the attraction of gravitation, which on earth causes the ship to break, was wanting. Such force of gravity as our ship knew was in itself—or would have been were not "Paulo" present.

ANOTHER explanation: while we could not see them, there might be lines of attraction, literally billions of them, between our craft and the whirling sphere, so that it would be supported not merely by the two nuclei at the ends with their visible lines of force, but by these others. Both, we found, were at work.

In addition, repellant rays were forcing us away, with a push equal to the pull of the attraction. The equilibrium was cleverly maintained. Also, our ship was surrounded by an invisible sheathing of electrons, the Electronic Wall, saving our lives. The Electronic Wall served many purposes. It maintained for us the atmospheric pressure—that of air at sea-level on the earth—to which we were accustomed, and without which we could not have existed. It was an insulating medium, preventing our heat content from being dissipated. It shut in our air of oxygen and nitrogen and it insulated us against certain undulations—not of light—but such as radio. This, of course, explained why we could not get messages either to or from the Government's stations. Apparently it also isolated thought rays. Even to communicate with us, the inhabitants of "Paulo" found it necessary to drop through the Wall a minute wire.

The Wall, and our being insulated from gravity, save our own, explained the curious happenings of the first night—the pin, which came back and clung to the ship's side; the ashes which would not stay dumped; the men walking head down on the bottom of the ship; and the breaking of Captain Green's leg. As the rifle was discharged away from the ship, no matter in what direction, the bullet had to return over the same path, with the same velocity. The Captain's limb got in the way, that was all.

The tooled ball above us was an inhabited world, a purposeful world. Over the wire they sent their thoughts and "Slim" received them. Through him we learned something of who they were, and of their history. We never saw them. I am sure that at times they visited us on the *Woodrow Wilson*, but as they never passed beneath a microscope's lens, their form and shape are unknown. We do know that they had minds and intelligence, and as they told us, they were, considering the proportionate size of their world and of ours, as large as we were. This would seem to be a working out of nature's laws and would make them 1/586 of an inch in height. Time for them, we found, was correspondingly increased, or shall I say diminished? This was their chief difficulty in communicating with us; in comparison with our mental processes, they thought with incredible rapidity; about 600 thoughts to one of ours. Their ingenuity found a way to reach us—mechanical, it is true, depending by analogy, on a reversal similar to the method used by Michelson in measuring the velocity of light.

Their world, they told us, was infinitely old, even by our standards. Their records went back for eons on eons beyond our surmised time ages. They claimed to have witnessed the birth of the sun's planetary system. Their account but verified the Chamberlain planetesimal theory.

Long, long ages ago these people—if I may call them such—passed through our periods of development; savagery, barbarism, slavery, serfdom, capitalism, socialism, into a pure freedom wherein the one purpose and delight is to know the truth and to serve. If they are to be believed, they live with no thought for themselves but only that they may bear succor to inhabitants of other worlds in other systems and universes. Thus had our ship been seized; as yet they concealed the purpose from us.

Dr. Baade, a clipping on whose reported discovery begins this history, had indeed sighted "Paulo." Its movement as observed, led him to deduce a path like to that of a parabola with aphelion, far beyond the othermost planet. Happening to pass within the strong gravitational field of the earth, he felt that it was captured and hereafter would travel in an approximately circular orbit about the world. He was wrong. "Paulo" is free.

Dr. Baade could not conceive that a ball so small could be the home of intelligent beings, who controlled, absolutely, its movements.

Long, long ago they had discovered the secret of the atom and its electrons, which one hundred years ago we were just finding. And beyond the electron, as far below the electron as the electron was beyond the atom, they found other forces. They utilized the electronic and other energy to the fullest extent. Also, gravitation, its causes and effects had long ceased to be a mystery to them, and had become instead a servant. With such forces—we could comprehend some, but not all concerning which they hinted—what wonder their world had no fixed orbit. They drive it as they will at speeds unimaginable. Neither Dr. Baade nor other scientists, look as they might, would ever find it in the same position again. Luck alone, had given the worthy Doctor his sight of "Paulo."

Of course, they explained, long ago they had used up the electronic energy of their world, but not before they had discovered how to control it. Now, when they ran short, they drove their orb to the sun or some other similar body, and took on a load of energy by absorption. "Paulo" and its people would never die.

They were immune to extra-"Paulo" effects of heat and cold. Their knowledge enabled them to sheath their world with the substance in which electrons have no movement, but are packed in, with the proton one against another. This material by earth standards, weighs sixty million tons to a cubic inch. Mathematics verifies this. In a ball imagined of such size that an electron is as large as an orange and the proton is a small pea, the radius of the electronic orbit is about one hundred and fifty miles. Plenty of room for weight when packed full.

We found that they blanketed us with the electronic fog and rendered it opaque, as a matter of kindness; that we might not be fear-smitten and worried. They knew our psychology; as we did not see the earth fall away beneath us, when it did come into view it seemed unreal and we regarded it as an hallucination, or a part of a bad dream. Likewise, our being gathered to hear the Voice, was psychological. It made us receptive to hypnotic suggestion.

Yet they were honest with us. While quieting our fears, and lulling our loneliness and longing for home and those left behind, they made no attempt to control us absolutely, as they easily might have done; volition and choice were left us.

Another odd thing: They cared for us physically in a way I cannot explain. No one was ill; health on the ship never was better. On discovering that we had a man with a broken leg, they sent in new rays; the bone was knit or built up and in two days Captain Green left his couch as well as ever.

"But where are we going?"

THE query was on everyone's lips. We did not believe we were being carried at a speed great enough to take us to a system outside the solar. We could only guess at our rate of travel, but knew the sun was always with us. Our navigators took sights but could give no figures as to position or speed. They were without a fixed point on which to base a comparison.

To what body were we bound? We knew it could not be the earth's moon, Jupiter, Saturn or Mercury, for all on board had some astronomical knowledge. Neither did Neptune nor Uranus seem possibilities. All were in such physical condition that we knew earth's inhabitants could not exist on them. While we might be headed for one of the larger asteroids, or one of the large satellites of some planet, majority opinion on board had seized on Venus or Mars as our destination.

"But what for?" Sergeant Graham, one of my room-mates was arguing. "What use will we be on either of these planets?"

"Maybe they need more fighters on Mars," said "Slim." "I guess a rebellion is going to give the king his."

"Perhaps the Venusians want us to teach them the correct way to hold a harp and sing in harmony," Sergeant Vessick added.

"But why suppose the Martians are fighters and the Venusians, love-birds? Because we named those planets that doesn't give their inhabitants characteristics we associate with those names, does it?" I, too, had a theory. "Why may we not be needed as teachers for a race lower in accomplishments than ours, on whom the inhabitants of 'Paulo' have taken pity?"

"All guesswork, of course," "Slim" insisted. "There are hundreds and thousands of possibilities. But granting we are to teach, are we to show them how to make modern weapons, how to prepare poison gas? Shall we educate them into the lying, hypocritical selfishness we call civilization? Shall we show them what war is?"

"Perhaps. Supposing they don't know any of the things we do, what will we teach them if not how to make them, and how to sell them, so as to get a profit?" Sergeant Vessick elaborated at some length; we all entered the discussion.

Time passed. There was no day; there was no night. Watches continued to click off time, but ever in the heavens burned a brilliant orb and all over the black vault, above, below, and round about, glittered points of light, some large, some tiny. "Three hundred hours," the Voice from "Slim's" lips had said. In that time we could travel to——

Some argued that "Paulo" with us in tow could not travel at as great a speed as did any of the planets. But suppose we did: Mercury with her 1,736 miles a minute gave for three hundred hours of travel, the distance from the earth to Mars.

On the other hand, others argued that it was just as reasonable to suppose we were travelling at twice, or ten times that speed. Certain stars have been determined to be moving at as high a rate as ten thousand miles a minute.

"Why the careful preparation of the little globe, if not that it may take on almost infinite speed?" They contended. And why not? Even at a speed of two thousand miles, ten hours before landing we still would be so far away from our destination that probably we hardly would realize our approach to it.

But by the fifth hour from the end of the time set by our captors, a luminous speck in the sky did seem somewhat brighter and larger. By the second hour it had grown to gigantic dimensions and for the next hour it looked as though we were rushing headlong to destruction. Yet we seemed neither worried nor anxious. Such was the confidence with which the inhabitants of "Paulo" had inspired us.

The time limit expired and still we had not reached the new sphere. Gigantic it lay beneath us, and all were scanning it. Glancing up, I noted that a change had come over the tiny world above us. Its revolution had ceased and from the ports in the equatorial girdle extended huge masts, jointed and apparently telescopic. I jumped to the conclusion, later verified by "Slim's" unknown informant on "Paulo," that these were necessary for controlling the electronic anti-gravitational force. The method is simple; protons, positively charged, are detached from the electrons, with their negative pull; the combined push and pull, when controlled, counteracts gravitational force which is itself protonic in nature.

It was but a short time after this that the trumpets sounded "Fall in." We gathered on the upper decks where "Slim" awaited us on the bridge, with the Voice's final message.

"WE have now brought you almost to your destination. But before we land you upon this planet, Mayalovan, as its inhabitants speak of it, or as you most inappropriately name it, Mars, we warn you of conditions you will be taught and helped to overcome.

"Your energies, your lung capacity, your blood pressure, and other physical peculiarities, have developed through myriad generations, enabling you to exist in the earth's gaseous envelope. Not for an instant could you live in the atmosphere which we here on 'Paulo' find most beneficial.

"The gravity on Mayalovan being but one-fourth

that to which you are accustomed, you will be able to perform marvellous feats of lifting and jumping. Be advised. Do not attempt them, for in so doing you use up your energies as rapidly as on earth, and here you will not find the atmosphere conditioned to recuperative processes such as you know. Not only will it take four times as long to repair the waste tissues, but four times four; and the process will be infinitely more painful. Avoid exertion.

"Mayalovan's air is built up differently from the earth's. The proportion of carbon dioxide on your world is one to twenty-five hundred; here it is much greater. We know it is not in sufficient quantity to cause death, but it may cause inconvenience. This, with other reasons, lead us to place you in an acclimating hall. You will leave the ship under cover of the Electronic Wall and enter this chamber.

"Here you will remain one hundred days. You will at first live under a pressure and in a breathing medium similar to what you have been accustomed. Gradually pressure will be diminished and the carbon dioxide content increased. By the end of this period you will have learned how to handle yourselves upon Mayalovan. Without danger or discomfort, you then may step out upon the planet. You will be ready for your mission.

"Know you that your errand is one almost of divine significance; that not only will you give of the seed of life, but you will be rewarded in a manner you now cannot realize. Your lives will be sweetened, purified and exalted and a love that passes your understanding of the present, will be yours.

"We long have known what is but suspected by your scientists—that the female life principle is far stronger and more persistent than that of the male. On Mayalovan, the result of this was long ago foreseen. The women have grown stronger, more beautiful, more intelligent; so too, have the men. But—the males gradually disappeared, for births became dominantly female. Today, few men live on Mayalovan. If the race shall live—and we would not, being able to prevent it, permit it to perish—males from another world must be brought to Mayalovan. To you, a selected body of men, we offer this honor. Yes, and the reward. Your ship was deliberately chosen, for although the races of earth are far, far behind in the race for the attainment of knowledge and eternal truth, you who listen, are of all earthbound, the most advanced. You are a picked body of men, the flower of your civilization, yet from Mayalovan you will have much to learn.

"Day by day you will see the women of this planet and each will be chosen, nay, already has been selected by her whose soul is most closely attuned and harmonized with his. There will be no haphazard 'falling in love.' You shall learn what is the perfect union. Yet you are not forced to remain on Mayalovan. Should any wish to return to earth, we will wipe their minds clear of the happenings, and set them back. Are there any such?"

Strange! Was it hypnotism? Or the higher spirituality of the appeal? Or mob psychology? Certainly, not a soul backed out.

"We did not believe any would fail to heed our appeal," went on the Voice. "This, then, is the great purpose to which you have been dedicated. May the Great, All-Loving Unity, reward you. You have come."

As the words were spoken there was a slight jerk, a creak and all was still. A glance over the side revealed the vessel resting on a rocky height in the midst of a green carpet of vegetation.

"Attention," commanded the Voice through "Slim." "Officers, for the last time command your men as you march off. The Electronic Wall is about you. Once more we offer: If a man would not come, let him speak. Now is the time!"

Not a voice in all that host was raised in protest. I felt only an anticipation, a calm happiness; and never a thought of Lonnie Dove, whom I had left but ten days before with vows of eternal constancy. I felt no regrets, no moral doubts; nor do I now. So much do Mayalovan's women exceed earth's loveliest.

We marched forth to meet "Love." For on the plain to greet us were the women of Mayalovan. Beauty!—The short, sharp indrawing of breath, the gigantic sigh of eighteen thousand men came as if of a single being. Beauty! Transcendent! Ethereal! Never have I dreamed of such loveliness! The gross was gone, only the pure, the unselfish, the sweetness of great knowledge and love written in the features, remained.

As an iron filing to a magnet, the gaze of each of us travelled to the face of the one woman; there it rested. For each woman was looking at her future mate. "One hundred days—" I sighed with regret at such a period of time, so vast, "until I offer my all to her." And I sensed she was thinking the same: "Until I can serve him." For already Mayalovan had reached the stage where service was synonymous with living.

We found we could communicate with one another. Even as the earth in 1938 was approaching the knowledge of thought transference, so in Mayalovan this method of communication was an achievement of past ages. No need for us to learn the language of Mayalovan, nor for them to learn ours. Thoughts are but pictures, the same in any language.

Slowly dragged the hours until the end of the hundred days. During the period of acclimatization much had happened. No sooner had we left the *Woodrow Wilson* than "Paulo" whirled it aloft and away, dropping it uninjured, as we later learned, at the south pole of Mayalovan. There it rested until—but I proceed too swiftly.

WE learned much of Mayalovan. Earth's astronomers have slowly been unravelling its mysteries by deductive processes, which being based on hypotheses true in the world, did not, however, apply on Mayalovan.

Mayalovan has life outside the human; it is entirely of the plant kingdom. Even the bacilli of decomposition are wanting. Cell life, such as we could determine, was wholly confined to human beings and to the vegetable kingdom. The green carpet, to which we descended on leaving the ship, was a peculiar moss developed into bearing a nourishing fruit; this we could see grow and increase in size as we watched; for in the unprotected open, it grows, bears fruits, and dies in a single day, re-

peating this over and over during the summer. Leaves and stalk, too, are edible. It goes without saying that Mayalovan is vegetarian. But what of that? Food is not for sensuous enjoyment; rather for rebuilding expended bodily tissues. On Mayalovan we make no great feasts and eat only the measured requirements.

The polar caps are not as supposed; they are neither clouds, nor snow, nor solidified carbon dioxide. Instead they are great treble-walled sheets of a light, durable, non-conducting metal, in Mayalovan called "amnia." These sheets are put up as the winter comes on and taken down with the advent of summer, in a manner that never varies. Each plate, of gigantic size compared with those used on earth, uptilts by mechanical means, slips into a groove in the soil's surface, and in the hot sun of the daytime, the fields of moss thrive and grow.

Machines and devices undreamed of on earth are in common use, all made of "amnia," which is considered the perfect metal. Planting, harvesting, conveyance—all are mechanical.

Water, so necessary to plant life, and almost gone from Mayalovan, is carefully stored in great "amnia" tanks in the interior of the planet. It is pumped out as needed through thousands of openings, following artificial channels to the fertile parts of Mayalovan. On its return it descends through rocky channels and over precipices until it finds a conductor-pit. On every stage of its journey it is carefully guarded. The air is sucked through great vents and denuded of its vapor. The statement is made on Mayalovan that our water will last for ninety million years before it is all used up. Why bother about one's descendants ninety million years hence? Ah, that is what the service concept means. "Not for one's self, but for others," born and unborn.

As the water is stored in the interior recesses of the planet, there, too, well-lighted, warmed and ventilated by artificially renovated air, are the homes of Mayalovan. On the surface only old ruins, now almost disintegrated, show. To these I must except the covers which top the vents of the inlets and outlets. These invariably are domes, resting on threaded pillars. In preparation for the cold nights these pillars, gigantic screws, are drawn down and lock the covers into place. On mornings when it is warm enough for human life on the surface, they are raised and one may visit where one wishes. Should one chance to remain out after the set closing time, he is not condemned to death. In each dome-base is a door giving admittance to a temperature-lock, from which one descends to the city below.

One thing which I failed to note, so entranced was I with Ahlovah's beauty, was the feathery wing-like growth on the back of my wife's arms from elbows up over her shoulders, meeting on the top of her head. This has something the appearance of the wings with which the humans of earth endow their angels. These of Mayalovan are not for flying. Rather they are a development from the hair for receiving and discharging thoughts. Ahlovah tells me they are of no great antiquity, having appeared on Mayalovan humans within the last hundred thousand years. I have not developed any such, although Ahlovah cheers me by saying she can feel the fibrils coming. Our children have them as fully as Ahlovah and the other women.

At the expiration of the hundred days, what a marriage feast did old Mayalovan witness! How swiftly sped the years since then. The happiness of good deeds well done, and the pleasure of knowledge acquired not for self but for all! Ahlovah and I have been rewarded. We have four children, two girls and two boys. Beautiful children! And when I say "beautiful children," I am thinking not only of my own. I mean all those descended from the men who sailed from Newport News on the *Woodrow Wilson* on that April day nearly one hundred years ago.

Of us men of earth, I can say truthfully not one regrets that he did not return when opportunity offered. We have a reward beyond price in the love we give and get. The birth of children on Mayalovan is a reward and privilege given mankind to carry on the great scheme of the universe.

But enough. I could talk forever on Mayalovan and our wondrous life there. To return now to the third of my references, that of the visualaud of Sept. 15, 2038. The first clipping I used to introduce and substantiate the history of our doings with "Paulo." The second forms the background for my explanation of the events which befell the *Woodrow Wilson* and her crew and passengers, up to the reappearance of the ship, as chronicled by the visualaud referred to.

No need of wild theories to explain its being found in the sand wastes of Australia. The truth is simple. It was picked up again from Mayalovan, and used as a vehicle to return me to this world; and my mission done, "Paulo" again will pick it up and return me to my loved ones.

I am here to serve.

WE, on Mayalovan, had hoped that after all these years we would be left undisturbed to complete our cycle of love and knowledge. But recently we discovered—for even we mortals of earth have acquired telepathic powers—that the earth was heading straight for another world conflict which would actively involve every human being, resulting in death, the torture of living death and hopeless despair for nearly everyone. The humanists on "Paulo" brought the word. They could not bear to see such torture perpetrated, nor consider the misery resulting, when it is so wholly uncalled for. The old world has advanced far enough by this time so that it ought to know better than to turn such a weapon on itself. Why should petty rivalries for this land or that land send men to die? There is enough and to spare. Why should petty jealousy, or a feeling of affront inspire hatred? Jealousy and supersensitiveness are subjective. In reality they cannot exist.

The little folk on "Paulo" found that they could accomplish nothing, because of their size and the vast numbers of humanity. They came to us, who were earth born. Would one of us go back? With our new knowledge and added powers, we could prevent the awful cataclysm. Who would go?

With the old spirit only, the great happiness we were blessed with, would have deterred anyone from such a duty. Now, with the new love, there were

eighteen thousand volunteers. Of course all could not go. Cross purposes, cross transfers of thought, even though well intended, would work more harm than good. Choice, we said, should determine the one to make the trip. I was honored by luck.

This then, is my first appeal: That you may understand that I speak of what I know, and from a world where war long ago has become obsolete, I write this for my friend Victor H. Jernseck. His magazine, owning to a life of nearly one hundred and twenty-five years, circulates now through the visualaud in twenty-seven million homes. May I ask that on December first of this year, all who get this history will listen for my telepathic messages.

Daily thereafter will I proclaim to the world that good always is more powerful than evil; that anger, and hatred, and war cannot exist where the friendly word is spoken.

Will you who love the right join me day by day in sending out the thoughts? Christian, pagan, Jew, or Mohammedan; Brahman or Buddhist; black or red; white or yellow; of whatever race or creed, color or nationality, if you would have peace hold the world, heed my call.

I have nothing to gain. I come but to serve. Good is all powerful. Let your thoughts carry it. For this be sure; hatred cannot shut out good. Much as it may struggle, anger can be subdued. It cannot shut itself away from love; to shut love out there never was, and never will be, an Electronic Wall. If you doubt, join me on my return trip to Mayalovan in the *Woodrow Wilson*.

THE END.

Readers' Vote of Preference

Stories I Like **Remarks**

(1) .....

(2) .....

(3) .....

Stories I Do Not Like: Why

(1) .....

(2) .....

Had I been one of the judges on the Awarding Committee, the following would have been the order of my votes for the prize winning stories, written around the cover illustration of the December, 1926, issue of AMAZING STORIES:

First Prize .....

Second Prize .....

Third Prize .....

Do you like the illustrations as we have them now? .....

Do you favor more illustrations than we have now? .....

Would you rather not have any illustrations at all? .....

This is YOUR magazine. Only by knowing what stories you like can we please you. Fill out this coupon or copy it and mail to AMAZING STORIES, 230 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Name .....

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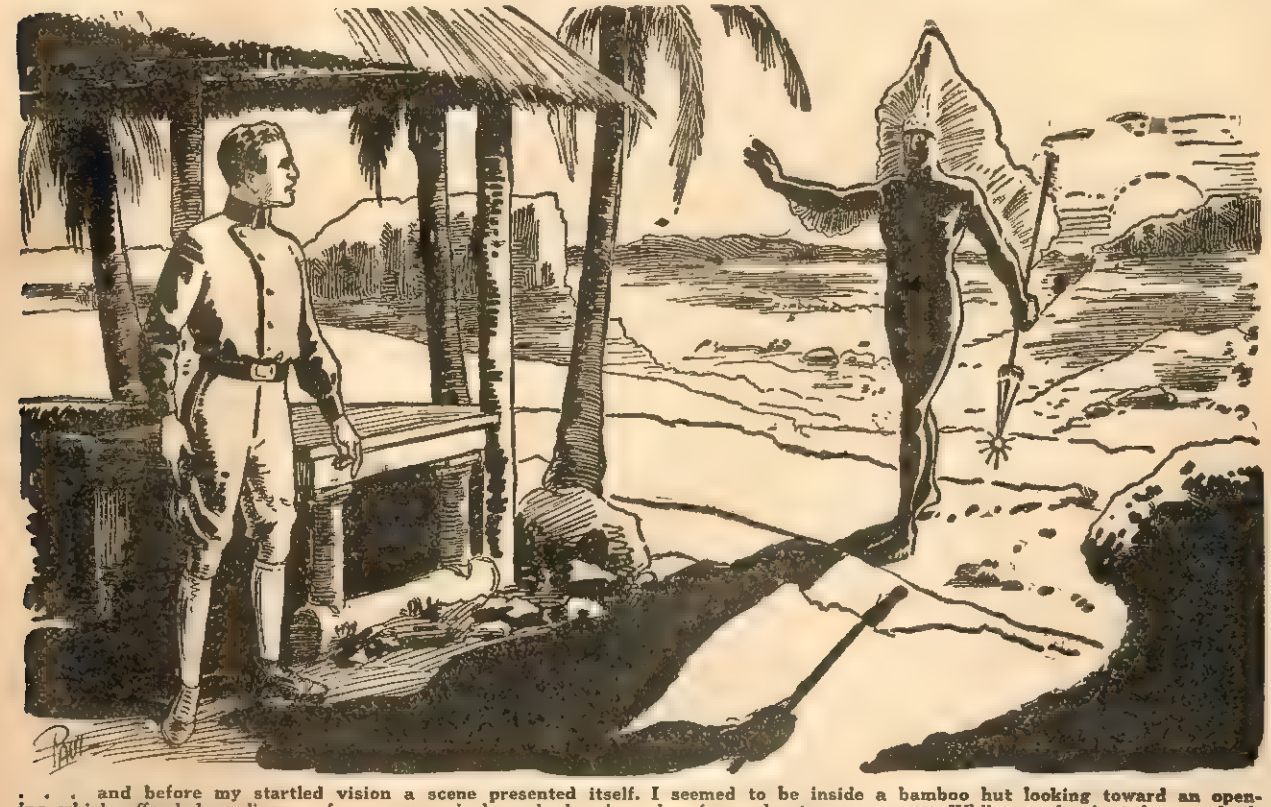
Wanted

The publishers need a quantity of back numbers of AMAZING STORIES for April, May, June and July, 1926.

If you have copies of these issues, will you please be good enough to get in touch with us? It would be appreciated. THE PUBLISHERS.

Third Prize Winner in the $500 Prize Cover Contest

Third Prize of $100.00 awarded to Mrs. F. C. Harris, 1652 Lincoln Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio, for "*The Fate of the Poseidonia*"



. . . and before my startled vision a scene presented itself. I seemed to be inside a bamboo hut looking toward an opening which afforded a glimpse of a wave-washed sandy beach and a few palm trees. . . . While my fascinated gaze dwelt on the scene before me, a shadow fell athwart the hut's entrance and the figure of a man came toward me.

The FATE of the POSEIDONIA

By CLARE WINGER HARRIS

I

THE first moment I laid eyes on Martell I took a great dislike to the man. There sprang up between us an antagonism that as far as he was concerned might have remained passive, but which circumstances forced into activity on my side.

How distinctly I recall the occasion of our meeting at the home of Professor Stearns, head of the Astronomy department of Austin College. The address which the professor proposed giving before the Mentor Club of which I was a member, was to be on the subject of the planet, Mars. The spacious front rooms of the Stearns home were crowded for the occasion with rows of chairs, and at the end of the double parlors a screen was erected for the purpose of presenting telescopic views of the ruddy planet in its various aspects.

As I entered the parlor after shaking hands with my hostess, I felt, rather than saw, an unfamiliar presence, and the impression I received involuntarily was that of antipathy. What I saw was the professor himself engaged in earnest conversation with a stranger. Intuitively I knew that from the latter emanated the hostility of which I was definitely conscious.

He was a man of slightly less than **average** height. At once I noticed that he did not appear exactly normal physically and yet I could not

THAT the third prize winner should prove to be a woman was one of the surprises of the contest, for, as a rule, women do not make good scientifiction writers, because their education and general tendencies on scientific matters are usually limited. But the exception, as usual, proves the rule, the exception in this case being extraordinarily impressive. The story has a great deal of charm, chiefly because it is not overburdened with science, but whatever science is contained therein is not only quite palatable, but highly desirable, due to its plausibility. Not only this, but you will find that the author is a facile writer who keeps your interest unto the last line. We hope to see more of Mrs. Harris's scientifiction in AMAZING STORIES.

ascertain in what way he was deficient. It was not until I had passed the entire evening in his company that I was fully aware of his bodily peculiarities. Perhaps the most striking characteristic was the swarthy, coppery hue of his flesh that was not unlike that of an American Indian. His chest and shoulders seemed abnormally developed, his limbs and features extremely slender in proportion. Another peculiar individuality was the wearing of a skull-cap pulled well down over his forehead.

Professor Stearns caught my eye, and with a friendly nod indicated his desire that I meet the new arrival.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Gregory," he said warmly as he clasped my hand. "I want you to meet Mr. Martell, a stranger in our town, but a kindred spirit, in that he is interested in Astronomy and particularly in the subject of my lecture this evening."

I extended my hand to Mr. Martell and imagined that he responded to my salutation somewhat reluctantly. Immediately I knew why. The texture of the skin was most unusual. For want of a better simile, I shall say that it felt not unlike a fine dry sponge. I do not believe that I betrayed any visible surprise, though inwardly my whole being revolted. The deep, close-set eyes of the stranger seemed searching me for any manifestation of antipathy, but I congratulate myself that my outward poise was undisturbed by the strange encounter.

The guests assembled, and I discovered to my chagrin that I was seated next to the stranger, Martell. Suddenly the lights were extinguished preparatory to the presentation of the lantern-slides. The darkness that enveloped us was intense. Supreme horror gripped me when I presently became conscious of two faint phosphorescent lights to my right. There could be no mistaking their origin. They were the eyes of Martell and they were regarding me with an enigmatical stare. Fascinated, I gazed back into those diabolical orbs with an emotion akin to terror. I felt that I should shriek and then attack their owner. But at the precise moment when my usually steady nerves threatened to betray me, the twin lights vanished. A second later the lantern light flashed on the screen. I stole a furtive glance in the direction of Martell. He was sitting with his eyes closed.

"The planet Mars should be of particular interest to us," began Professor Stearns, "not only because of its relative proximity to us, but because of the fact that there are visible upon its surface undeniable evidences of the handiwork of man, and I am inclined to believe in the existence of mankind there not unlike the humanity of the earth."

The discourse proceeded uninterruptedly. The audience remained quiet and attentive, for Professor Stearns possessed the faculty of holding his listeners spell-bound. A large map of one hemisphere of Mars was thrown on the screen, and simultaneously the stranger Martell drew in his breath sharply with a faint whistling sound.

The professor continued, "Friends, do you observe that the outstanding physical difference between Mars and Terra appears to be in the relative distribution of land and water? On our own globe the terrestrial parts lie as distinct entities surrounded by the vast aqueous portions, whereas, on Mars the land and water are so intermingled by gulfs, bays, capes and peninsulas that it requires careful study to ascertain for a certainty which is which. It is my opinion, and I do not hold it alone, for much discussion with my worthy colleagues has made it obvious, that the peculiar land contours are due to the fact that water is becoming a very scarce commodity on our neighboring planet. Much of what is now land is merely the exposed portions of the one-time ocean bed; the precious life-giving fluid now occupying only the lowest depressions. We may conclude that the telescopic eye, when turned on Mars, sees a waning world; the habitat of a people struggling desperately and vainly for existence, with inevitable extermination facing them in the not far distant future. What will they do? If they are no farther advanced in the evolutionary stage than a carrot or a jelly-fish, they will ultimately succumb to fate, but if they are men and women such as you and I, they will fight for the continuity of their race. I am inclined to the opinion that the Martians will not die without putting up a brave struggle, which will result in the prolongation of their existence, but not in their complete salvation."

Professor Stearns paused. "Are there any questions?" he asked.

I was about to speak when the voice of Martell boomed in my ear, startling me.

"In regard to the map, professor," he said, "I believe that gulf which lies farthest south is not a gulf at all but is a part of the land portion surrounding it. I think you credit the poor dying planet with even more water than it actually has!"

"It is possible and even probable that I have erred," replied the learned man, "and I am sorry indeed if that gulf is to be withdrawn from the credit of the Martians, for their future must look very black."

"Just suppose," resumed Martell, leaning toward the lecturer with interested mien, "that the Martians were the possessors of an intelligence equal to that of terrestrials, what might they do to save themselves from total extinction? In other words to bring it home to us more realistically, what would *we* do were we threatened with a like disaster?"

"That is a very difficult question to answer, and one upon which merely an opinion could be ventured," smiled Professor Stearns. "'Necessity is the mother of invention', and in our case without the likelihood of the existence of the mother, we can hardly hazard a guess as to the nature of the offspring. But always, as Terra's resources have diminished, the mind of man has discovered substitutes. There has always been a way out, and let us hope our brave planetary neighbors will succeed in solving their problem."

"Let us hope so indeed," echoed the voice of Martell.

II

AT the time of my story in the winter of 1894-1895, I was still unmarried and was living in a private hotel on E. Ferguson Ave., where I enjoyed the comforts of well furnished bachelor quarters. To my neighbors I paid little or no attention, absorbed in my work during the day and paying court to Margaret Landon in the evenings.

I was not a little surprised upon one occasion, as I stepped into the corridor, to see a strange yet familiar figure in the hotel locking the door of the apartment adjoining my own. Almost instantly I recognized Martell, on whom I had not laid eyes since the meeting some weeks previous at the home of Professor Stearns. He evinced no more pleasure at our meeting than I did, and after the exchange of a few cursory remarks from which I learned that he was my new neighbor, we went our respective ways.

I thought no more of the meeting, and as I am not blessed or cursed (as the case may be) with a natural curiosity concerning the affairs of those about me, I seldom met Martell, and upon the rare occasions when I did, we confined our remarks to that ever convenient topic, the weather.

Between Margaret and myself there seemed to be growing an inexplicable estrangement that increased as time went on, but it was not until after five repeated futile efforts to spend an evening in her company that I suspected the presence of a rival. Imagine my surprise and chagrin to discover that rival in the person of my neighbor Martell! I saw them together at the theatre and wondered, even with all due modesty, what there was in the ungainly figure and peculiar character of Martell to attract a beautiful and refined girl of Margaret Landon's type. But attract her he did, for it was plainly evident, as I watched them with the eyes of a jealous lover, that Margaret was fascinated by the personality of her escort.

In sullen rage I went to Margaret a few days later, expressing my opinion of her new admirer in derogatory epithets. She gave me calm and dignified attention until I had exhausted my vocabulary, voicing my ideas of Martell, then she made reply in Martell's defense.

"Aside from personal appearance, Mr. Martell is a forceful and interesting character, and I refuse to allow you to dictate to me who my associates are to be. There is no reason why we three can not all be friends."

"Martell hates me as I hate him," I replied with smoldering resentment. "That is sufficient reason why we three can not all be friends."

"I think you must be mistaken," she replied curtly. "Mr. Martell praises your qualities as a neighbor and comments not infrequently on your excellent virtue of attending strictly to your own business."

I left Margaret's presence in a down-hearted mood.

"So Martell appreciates my lack of inquisitiveness, does he?" I mused as later I reviewed mentally the closing words of Margaret, and right then and there doubts and suspicions arose in my mind. If self-absorption was an appreciable quality as far as Martell was concerned, there was reason for his esteem of that phase of my character. I had discovered the presence of a mystery; Martell had something to conceal!

It was New Year's Day, not January 1st as they had it in the old days, but the extra New Year's Day that was sandwiched as a separate entity between two years. This new chronological reckoning had been put into use in 1938. The calendar had previously contained twelve months varying in length from twenty-eight to thirty-one days, but with the addition of a new month and the adoption of a uniformity of twenty-eight days for all months and the interpolation of an isolated New Year's Day, the world's system of chronolgy was greatly simplified. It was, as I say, on New Year's Day that I arose later than usual and dressed myself. The buzzing monotone of a voice from Martell's room annoyed me. Could he be talking over the telephone to Margaret? Right then and there I stooped to the performance of a deed of which I did not think myself capable. Ineffable curiosity converted me into a spy and an eavesdropper. I dropped to my knees and peered through the keyhole. I was rewarded with an unobstructed profile view of Martell seated at a low desk on which stood a peculiar cubical mechanism measuring on each edge six or seven inches. Above it hovered a tenuous vapor and from it issued strange sounds, occasionally interrupted by remarks from Martell uttered in an unknown tongue. Good heavens! Was this a new-fangled radio that communicated with the spirit-world? For only in such a way could I explain the peculiar vapor that enveloped the tiny machine. Television had been perfected and in use for a generation, but as yet no instrument had been invented which delivered messages from the "unknown bourne!"

I crouched in my undignified position until it was with difficulty that I arose, at the same time that Martell shut off the mysterious contrivance. Could Margaret be involved in any diabolical schemes? The very suggestion caused me to break out in a cold sweat. Surely Margaret, the very personification of innocence and purity, could be no partner in any nefarious undertakings! I resolved to call her up. She answered the phone and I thought her voice showed agitation.

"Margaret, this is George," I said. "Are you all right?"

She answered faintly in the affirmative.

"May I come over at once?" I pled. "I have something important to tell you."

To my surprise she consented, and I lost no time in speeding my volplane to her home. With no introductory remarks, I plunged right into a narrative of the peculiar and suspicious actions of Martell, and ended by begging her to discontinue her association with him. Ever well poised and with a girlish dignity that was irresistibly charming, Margaret quietly thanked me for my solicitude for her well-being but assured me that there was nothing to fear from Martell. It was like beating against a brick wall to obtain any satisfaction from her, so I returned to my lonely rooms, there to brood in solitude over the unhappy change that Martell had brought into my life.

Once again I gazed through the tiny aperture. My neighbor was nowhere to be seen, but on the desk stood that which I mentally termed the devil-machine. The subtle mist that had previously hovered above it was wanting.

The next day upon arising I was drawn as by a magnet toward the keyhole, but my amazement knew no bounds when I discovered that it had been plug-

ged from the other side, and my vision completely barred!

"Well I guess it serves me right," I muttered in my chagrin. "I ought to keep out of other people's private affairs. But," I added as an afterthought in feeble defense of my actions, "my motive is to save Margaret from that scoundrel." And such I wanted to prove him to be before it was too late!

III

THE sixth of April, 1945, was a memorable day in the annals of history, especially to the inhabitants of Pacific coast cities throughout the world. Radios buzzed with the alarming and mystifying news that just over night the ocean line had receded several feet. What cataclysm of nature could have caused the disappearance of thousands of tons of water inside of twenty-four hours? Scientists ventured the explanation that internal disturbances must have resulted in the opening of vast submarine fissures into which the seas had poured.

This explanation, stupendous as it was, sounded plausible enough and was accepted by the world at large, which was too busy accumulating gold and silver to worry over the loss of nearly a million tons of water. How little we then realized that the relative importance of gold and water was destined to be reversed, and that man was to have forced upon him a new conception of values which would bring to him a complete realization of his former erroneous ideas.

May and June passed marking little change in the drab monotony that had settled into my life since Margaret Landon had ceased to care for me. One afternoon early in July I received a telephone call from Margaret. Her voice betrayed an agitated state of mind, and sorry though I was that she was troubled, it pleased me that she had turned to me in her despair. Hope sprang anew in my breast, and I told her I would be over at once.

I was admitted by the taciturn housekeeper and ushered into the library where Margaret rose to greet me as I entered. There were traces of tears in her lovely eyes. She extended both hands to me in a gesture of spontaneity that had been wholly lacking in her attitude toward me ever since the advent of Martell. In the rôle of protector and advisor, I felt that I was about to be reinstated in her regard.

But my joy was short-lived as I beheld a recumbent figure on the great davenport and recognized it instantly as that of Martell. So he was in the game after all! Margaret had summoned me because her lover was in danger! I turned to go but felt a restraining hand.

"Wait, George," the girl pled. "The doctor will be here any minute."

"Then let the doctor attend to him," I replied coldly. "I know nothing of the art of healing."

"I know, George," Margaret persisted, "but he mentioned you before he lost consciousness and I think he wants to speak to you. Won't you wait please?"

I paused, hesitant at the supplicating tones of her whom I loved, but at that moment the maid announced the doctor, and I made a hasty exit.

Needless to say I experienced a sense of guilt as I returned to my rooms.

"But," I argued as I seated myself comfortably before my radio, "a rejected lover would have to be a very magnanimous specimen of humanity to go running about doing favors for a rival. What do the pair of them take me for anyway—a fool?"

I rather enjoyed a consciousness of righteous indignation, but disturbing visions of Margaret gave me an uncomfortable feeling that there was much about the affair that was incomprehensible to me.

"The transatlantic passenger-plane, *Pegasus*, has mysteriously disappeared," said the voice of the news announcer. "One member of her crew has been picked up who tells such a weird, fantastic tale that it has not received much credence. According to his story the *Pegasus* was winging its way across mid-ocean last night keeping an even elevation of three thousand feet, when, without any warning, the machine started straight up. Some force outside of itself was drawing it up, but whither? The rescued mechanic, the only one of all the fated ship's passengers, possessed the presence of mind to manipulate his parachute, and thus descended in safety before the air became too rare to breathe, and before he and the parachute could be attracted upwards. He stoutly maintains that the plane could not have fallen later without his knowledge. Scouting planes, boats and submarines sent out this morning verify his seemingly mad narration. Not a vestige of the *Pegasus* is to be found above, on the surface or below the water. Is this tragedy in any way connected with the lowering of the ocean level? Has some one a theory? In the face of such an inexplicable enigma the government will listen to the advancement of any theories, in the hope of solving the mystery. Too many times in the past have the so-called level-headed people failed to give ear to the warnings of theorists and dreamers, but now we know that the latter are often the possessors of a sixth sense that enables them to see that to which the bulk of mankind is blind."

I was awed by the fate of the *Pegasus*. I had had two flights in the wonderful machine myself three years ago, and I knew that it was the last word in luxuriant air-travel.

How long I sat listening to brief news bulletins and witnessing scenic flashes of worldly affairs I do not know, but there suddenly came to my mind and persisted in staying there, a very disquieting thought. Several times I dismissed it as unworthy of any consideration, but it continued with unmitigating tenacity.

After an hour of mental pros and cons I called up the hotel office.

"This is Mr. Gregory in suite 307," I strove to keep my voice steady. "Mr. Martell of 309 is ill at the house of a friend. He wishes me to have some of his belongings taken to him. May I have the key to his rooms?"

There was a pause that to me seemed interminable, then the voice of the clerk. "Certainly, Mr. Gregory, I'll send a boy up with it at once."

I felt like a culprit of the deepest dye as I entered Martell's suite a few moments later and gazed about me. I knew I might expect interference from any quarter at any moment so I wasted no time in a general survey of the apartment but proceeded at once to the object of my visit. The tiny machine which I now perceived was more intricate than I

had supposed from my previous observations through the keyhole, stood in its accustomed place upon the desk. It had four levers and a dial, and I decided to manipulate each of these in turn. I commenced with the one at my extreme left. For a moment apparently nothing happened, then I realized that above the machine a mist was forming.

At first it was faint and cloudy but the haziness quickly cleared, and before my startled vision a scene presented itself. I seemed to be inside a bamboo hut looking toward an opening which afforded a glimpse of a wave-washed sandy beach and a few palm trees silhouetted against the horizon. I could imagine myself on a desert isle. I gasped in astonishment, but it was nothing to the shock which was to follow. While my fascinated gaze dwelt on the scene before me, a shadow fell athwart the hut's entrance and the figure of a man came toward me. I uttered a hoarse cry. For a moment I thought I had been transplanted chronologically to the discovery of America, for the being who approached me bore a general resemblance to an Indian chief. From his forehead tall, white feathers stood erect. He was without clothing and his skin had a reddish cast that glistened with a coppery sheen in the sunlight. Where had I seen those features or similar ones, recently? I had it! Martell! The Indian savage was a natural replica of the suave and civilized Martell, and yet was this man before me a savage? On the contrary, I noted that his features displayed a remarkably keen intelligence.

The stranger approached a table upon which I seemed to be, and raised his arms. A muffled cry escaped my lips! The feathers that I had supposed constituted his headdress were attached permanently along the upper portion of his arms to a point a little below each elbow. *They grew there.* This strange being had feathers instead of hair.

I do not know by what presence of mind I managed to return the lever to its original position, but I did, and sat weakly gazing vacantly at the air, where but a few seconds before a vivid tropic scene had been visible. Suddenly a low buzzing sound was heard. Only for an instant was I mystified, then I knew that the stranger of the desert-isle was endeavoring to summon Martell.

Weak and dazed I waited until the buzzing had ceased and then I resolutely pulled the second of the four levers. At the inception of the experiment the same phenomena were repeated, but when a correct perspective was effected a very different scene was presented before my startled vision. This time I seemed to be in a luxuriant room filled with costly furnishings, but I had time only for a most fleeting glance, for a section of newspaper that had intercepted part of my view, moved, and from behind its printed expanse emerged a being who bore a resemblance to Martell and the Indian of the desert island. It required but a second to turn off the mysterious connection, but that short time had been of sufficient duration to enable me to read the heading of the paper in the hands of a copper-hued man. It was *Die Münchener Zeitung.*

Still stupefied by the turn of events, it was with a certain degree of enjoyment that I continued to experiment with the devil-machine. I was startled when the same buzzing sound followed the disconnecting of the instrument.

I was about to manipulate the third lever when I became conscious of pacing footsteps in the outer hall. Was I arousing the suspicion of the hotel officials? Leaving my seat before the desk, I began to move about the room in semblance of gathering together Martell's required articles. Apparently satisfied, the footsteps retreated down the corridor and were soon inaudible.

Feverishly now I fumbled with the third lever. There was no time to lose and I was madly desirous of investigating all the possibilities of this new kind of television-set. I had no doubt that I was on the track of a nefarious organization of spies, and I worked on in the self-termed capacity of a Sherlock Holmes.

The third lever revealed an apartment no less sumptuous than the German one had been. It appeared to be unoccupied for the present, and I had ample time to survey its expensive furnishings which had an oriental appearance. Through an open window at the far end of the room I glimpsed a mosque with domes and minarets. I could not ascertain for a certainty whether this was Turkey or India. It might have been any one of many eastern lands, I could not know. The fact that the occupant of this oriental apartment was temporarily absent made me desirous of learning more about it, but time was precious to me now, and I disconnected. No buzzing followed upon this occasion, which strengthened my belief that my lever manipulation sounded a similar buzzing that was audible in the various stations connected for the purpose of accomplishing some wicked scheme.

The fourth handle invited me to further investigation. I determined to go through with my secret research though I died in the effort. Just before my hand dropped, the buzzing commenced, and I perceived for the first time a faint glow near the lever of No. 4. I dared not investigate 4 at this time, for I did not wish it known that another than Martell was at this station. I thought of going on to dial 5, but an innate love of system forced me to risk a loss of time rather than to take them out of order. The buzzing continued for the usual duration of time, but I waited until it had apparently ceased entirely before I moved No. 4.

My soul rebelled at that which took form from the emanating mist. A face, another duplicate of Martell's, but if possible more cruel, confronted me, completely filling up the vaporous space, and two phosphorescent eyes seared a warning into my own. A nauseating sensation crept over me as my hand crept to the connecting part of No. 4. When every vestige of the menacing face had vanished, I arose weakly and took a few faltering steps around the room. A bell was ringing with great persistance from some other room. It was mine! It would be wise to answer it. I fairly flew back to my room and was rewarded by the sound of Margaret's voice with a note of petulance in it.

"Why didn't you answer, George? The phone rang several times."

"Couldn't. Was taking a bath," I lied.

"Mr. Martell is better," continued Margaret. "The doctor says there's no immediate danger."

There was a pause and the sound of a rasping voice a little away from the vicinity of the phone, and then Margaret's voice came again.

"Mr. Martell wants you to come over, George. He wants to see you."

"Tell him I have to dress after my bath, then I'll come," I answered.

IV

THERE was not a moment to spare. I rushed back into Martell's room determined to see this thing through. I had never been subject to heart attacks, but certainly the suffocating sensation that possessed me could be attributed to no other cause.

A loud buzzing greeted my ears as soon as I had closed the door of Martell's suite. I looked toward the devil-machine. The four stations were buzzing at once! What was I to do? There was no light near dial 5, and that alone remained uninvestigated. My course of action was clear; try out No. 5 to my satisfaction, leave Martell's rooms and go to Margaret Landon's home as I had told her I would. They must not know what I had done. But it was inevitable that Martell would know when he got back to his infernal television and radio. *He must not get back!* Well, time enough to plan that later; now to the work of seeing No. 5.

When I turned the dial of No. 5 (for, as I have stated before, this was a dial instead of a lever) I was conscious of a peculiar sensation of distance. It fairly took my breath away. What remote part of the earth's surface would the last position reveal to me?

A sharp hissing sound accompanied the manipulation of No. 5 and the vaporous shroud was very slow in taking definite shape. When it was finally at rest, and it was apparent that it would not change further, the scene depicted was at first incomprehensible to me. I stared with bulging eyes and bated breath trying to read any meaning into the combinations of form and color that had taken shape before me.

In the light of what has since occurred, the facts of which are known throughout the world, I can lend my description a little intelligence borrowed, as it were, from the future. At the time of which I write, however, no such enlightenment was mine, and it must have been a matter of minutes before the slightest knowledge of the significance of the scene entered my uncomprehending brain.

My vantage-point seemed to be slightly aerial, for I was looking down upon a scene possibly fifty feet below me. Arid red cliffs and promontories jutted over dry ravines and crevices. In the immediate foreground and also across a deep gully, extended a comparatively level area which was the scene of some sort of activity. There was about it a vague suggestion of a shipyard, yet I saw no lumber, only great mountainous piles of dull metal, among which moved thousands of agile figures. They were men and women, but how strange they appeared! Their red bodies were minus clothing of any description and their heads and shoulders were covered with long white feathers that when folded, draped the upper portions of their bodies like shawls. They were unquestionably of the same race as the desert-island stranger—and Martell! At times the feathers of these strange people stood erect and spread out like a peacock's tail. I noticed that when spread in this fan-like fashion they facilitated locomotion.

I glanced toward the sun far to my right and wondered if I had gone crazy. I rubbed my hands across my eyes and peered again. Yes, it was our luminary, but it was little more than half its customary size! I watched it sinking with fascinated gaze. It vanished quickly beyond the red horizon and darkness descended with scarcely a moment of intervening twilight. It was only by the closest observation that I could perceive that I was still in communication with No. 5.

Presently the gloom was dissipated by a shaft of light from the opposite horizon whither the sun had disappeared. So rapidly that I could follow its movement across the sky, the moon hove into view. But wait, was it the moon? Its surface looked strangely unfamiliar, and it too seemed to have shrunk in size.

Spellbound, I watched the tiny moon glide across the heavens the while I listened to the clang of metal tools from the workers below. Again a bright light appeared on the horizon beyond the great metal bulks below me. The scene was rapidly being rendered visible by an orb that exceeded the sun in diameter. Then I knew. Great God! There were two moons traversing the welkin! My heart was pounding so loudly that it drowned out the sound of the metal-workers. I watched on, unconscious of the passage of time.

Voices shouted from below in great excitement. Events were evidently working up to some important climax while the little satellite passed from my line of vision and only the second large moon occupied the sky. Straight before me and low on the horizon it hung with its lower margin touching the cliffs. It was low enough now so that a few of the larger stars were becoming visible. One in particular attracted my gaze and held it. It was a great bluish-green star and I noticed that the workers paused seemingly to gaze in silent admiration at its transcendent beauty. Then shout after shout arose from below and I gazed in bewilderment at the spectacle of the next few minutes, or was it hours?

A great spherical bulk hove in view from the right of my line of vision. It made me think of nothing so much as a gyroscope of gigantic proportions. It seemed to be made of the metal with which the workers were employed below, and as it gleamed in the deep blue of the sky it looked like a huge satellite. A band of red metal encircled it with points of the same at top and bottom. Numerous openings that resembled the port-holes of an ocean-liner appeared in the broad central band, from which extended metal points. I judged these were the "eyes" of the machine. But that which riveted my attention was an object that hung poised in the air below the mighty gyroscope, held in suspension by some mysterious force, probably magnetic in nature, evidently controlled in such a manner that at a certain point it was exactly counter-balanced by the gravitational pull. The lines of force apparently traveled from the poles of the mammoth sphere. But the object that depended in mid-air, as firm and rigid as though resting on terra-firma, was the missing *Pegasus*, the epitome of earthly scientific skill, but in the clutches of this unearthly looking marauder it looked like a fragile toy. Its wings were bent and

twisted, giving it an uncanny resemblance to a bird in the claws of a cat.

In my spellbound contemplation of this new phenomenon I had temporarily forgotten the scene below, but suddenly a great cloud momentarily blotted out the moon, then another and another and another, in rapid succession. Huge bulks of air-craft were eclipsing the moon. Soon the scene was all but obliterated by the machines whose speed accelerated as they reached the upper air. On and on they sped in endless procession while the green star gazed serenely on! The green star, most sublime of the starry host! I loved its pale beauty though I knew not why. Darkness. The moon had set, but I knew that still those frightfully gigantic and ominous shapes still sped upward and onward. Whither?

The tiny moon again made its appearance, serving to reveal once more that endless aerial migration. Was it hours or days? I had lost all sense of the passage of time. The sound of rushing feet, succeeded by a pounding at the door brought me back to my immediate surroundings. I had the presence of mind to shut off the machine, then I arose and assumed a defensive attitude as the door opened and many figures confronted me. Foremost among them was Martell, his face white with rage, or was it fear?

"Officers, seize that man," he cried furiously. "I did not give him permission to spy in my room. He lied when he said that." Here Martell turned to the desk clerk who stood behind two policemen.

"Speaking of spying," I flung back at him, "Martell, you ought to know the meaning of that word. He's a spy himself," I cried to the two apparently unmoved officers, "why he—he—"

From their unsympathetic attitudes, I knew the odds were against me. I had lied, and I had been found in a man's private rooms without his permission. It would be a matter of time and patience before I could persuade the law that I had any justice on my side.

I was handcuffed and led toward the door just as a sharp pain like an icy clutch at my heart overcame me. I sank into oblivion.

V

WHEN I regained consciousness two days later I discovered that I was the sole occupant of a cell in the State hospital for the insane. Mortified to the extreme, I pled with the keeper to bring about my release, assuring him that I was unimpaired mentally.

"Sure, that's what they all say," the fellow remarked with a wry smile.

"But I must be freed," I reiterated impatiently, "I have a message of importance for the world. I must get into immediate communication with the Secretary of War."

"Yes, yes," agreed the keeper affably. "We'll let you see the Secretary of War when that fellow over there," he jerked his thumb in the direction of the cell opposite mine, "dies from drinking hemlock. He says he's Socrates, and every time he drinks a cup of milk he flops over, but he always revives."

I looked across the narrow hall into a pair of eyes that mirrored a deranged mind, then my gaze turned to the guard who was watching me narrowly. I turned away with a shrug of despair.

Later in the day the man appeared again but I sat in sullen silence in a corner of my cell. Days passed in this manner until at last a plausible means of communication with the outside world occurred to me. I asked if my good friend Professor Stearns might be permitted to visit me. The guard replied that he believed it could be arranged for sometime the following week. It is a wonder I did not become demented, imprisoned as I was, in solitude, with the thoughts of the mysterious revelations haunting me continually.

One afternoon the keeper, passing by on one of his customary rounds, thrust a newspaper between the bars of my cell. I grabbed it eagerly and retired to read it.

The headlines smote my vision with an almost tactile force.

"Second Mysterious Recession of Ocean. The *Poseidonia* is lost!"

I continued to read the entire article, the letters of which blazed before my eyes like so many pinpoints of light.

"Ocean waters have again receded, this time in the Atlantic. Seismologists are at a loss to explain the mysterious cataclysm as no earth tremors have been registered. It is a little over three months since the supposed submarine fissures lowered the level of the Pacific ocean several feet, and now the same calamity, only to a greater extent, has visited the Atlantic.

"The island of Madeira reports stranded fish upon her shores by the thousands, the decay of which threatens the health of the island's population. Two merchant vessels off the Azores, and one fifty miles out from Gibraltar, were found total wrecks. Another, the *Transatlantia*, reported a fearful agitation of the ocean depths, but seemed at a loss for a plausible explanation, as the sky was cloudless and no wind was blowing.

"'But despite this fact,' wired the *Transatlantia*, 'great waves all but capsized us. This marine disturbance lasted throughout the night.'

"The following wireless from the great ocean liner, *Poseidonia*, brings home to us the realization that Earth has been visited with a stupendous calamity. The *Poseidonia* was making her weekly transatlantic trip between Europe and America, and was in mid-ocean at the time her message was flashed to the world.

"'A great cloud of flying objects of enormous proportions has just appeared in the sky blotting out the light of the stars. No sound accompanies the approach of this strange fleet. In appearance the individual craft resemble mammoth balloons. The sky is black with them and in their vicinity the air is humid and oppressive as though the atmosphere were saturated to the point of condensation. Everything is orderly. There are no collisions. Our captain has given orders for us to turn back toward Europe—we have turned, but the dark dirigibles are pursuing us. Their speed is unthinkable. Can the *Poseidonia*, doing a mere hundred miles an hour, escape? A huge craft is bearing down upon us from above and behind. There is no escape. Pandemonium reigns. The enemy—'

"Thus ends the tragic message from the brave wireless operator of the *Poseidonia*."

I threw down the paper and called loudly for the keeper. Socrates across the hall eyed me suspiciously. I was beginning to feel that perhaps the poor demented fellow had nothing on me; that I should soon be in actuality a raving maniac.

The keeper came in response to my call, entered my cell and patted my shoulders reassuringly.

"Never mind, old top," he said, "it isn't so bad as it seems."

"Now look here," I burst forth angrily, "I tell you I am *not* insane!" How futile my words sounded! "If you will send Professor Mortimer Stearns, teacher of Astronomy at Austin, to me at once for an hour's talk, I'll prove to the world that I have not been demented."

"Professor Stearns is a very highly esteemed friend of mine," I continued, noting the suspicion depicted on his countenance. "If you wish, go to him first and find out his true opinion of me. I'll wager it will not be an uncomplimentary one!"

The man twisted his keys thoughtfully, and I uttered not a word, believing a silent demeanor most effective in the present crisis. After what seemed an eternity:

"All right," he said, "I'll see what can be done toward arranging a visit from Professor Mortimer Stearns as soon as possible."

I restrained my impulse toward a too effusive expression of gratitude as I realized that a quiet dignity prospered my cause more effectually.

The next morning at ten, after a constant vigil, I was rewarded with the most welcome sight of Professor Stearns striding down the hall in earnest conversation with the guard. He was the straw and I the drowning man, but would he prove a more substantial help than the proverbial straw? I surely hoped so.

A chair was brought for the professor and placed just outside my cell. I hastily drew my own near it.

"Well, this is indeed unfortunate," said Mortimer Stearns with some embarrassment, "and I sincerely hope you will soon be released."

"Unfortunate!" I echoed. "It is nothing short of a calamity."

My indignation voiced so vociferously startled the good professor and he shoved his chair almost imperceptibly away from the intervening bars. At the far end of the hall the keeper eyed me suspiciously. Hang it all, was my last resort going to fail me?

"Professor Stearns," I said earnestly, "will you try to give me an unbiased hearing? My situation is a desperate one, and it is necessary for some one to believe in me before I can render humanity the service it needs."

He responded to my appeal with something of his old sincerity, that always endeared him to his associates.

"I shall be glad to hear your story, Gregory, and if I can render any service, I'll not hesitate—"

"That's splendid of you," I interrupted with emotion, "and now to my weird tale."

I related from the beginning, omitting no details, however trivial they may have seemed, the series of events that had brought me to my present predicament.

"And your conclusion?" queried the professor in strange, hollow tones.

"That Martian spies, one of whom is Martell, are superintending by radio and television, an unbelieveably well-planned theft of Earth's water in order to replenish their own dry ocean beds!"

"Stupendous!" gasped Professor Stearns. "Something must be done to prevent another raid. Let's see," he mused, "the interval was three months before, was it not? Three months we shall have for bringing again into use the instruments of war that praise God! have lain idle for many generations. It is the only way to deal with a formidable foe from outside.

VI

PROFESSOR STEARNS was gone, but there was hope in my heart in place of the former grim despair. When the guard handed the evening paper to me I amazed him with a grateful "thank you." But my joy was short-lived. Staring up at me from the printed passenger-list of the ill-fated *Poseidonia* were the names of Mr. and Mrs. T. M. Landon and daughter Margaret!

I know the guard classed me as one of the worst cases on record, but I felt that surely Fate had been unkind.

"A package for Mr. George Gregory," bawled a voice in the corridor.

Thanks to the influence of Professor Stearns, I was permitted to receive mail. When the guard saw that I preferred unwrapping it myself, he discreetly left me to the mystery of the missive.

A card just inside bore the few but insignificant words, "For Gregory in remembrance of Martell."

I suppressed an impulse to dash the accursed thing to the floor when I saw that it was Martell's radio and television instrument. Placing it upon the table I drew a chair up to it and turned each of the levers, but not one functioned. I manipulated the dial No. 5. The action was accompanied by the same hissing sound that had so startled my overwrought nerves upon the previous occasion. Slowly the wraithlike mist commenced the process of adjustment. Spellbound I watched the scene before my eyes.

Again I had the sensation of a lofty viewpoint. It was identical with the one I had previously held, but the scene—was it the same? It must be—and yet! The barren red soil was but faintly visible through a verdure. The towering rocky palisades that bordered the chasm were crowned with golden-roofed dwellings, or were they temples, for they were like the pure marble fanes of the ancient Greeks except in color. Down the steep slopes flowed streams of sparkling water that dashed with a merry sound to a canal below.

Gone were the thousands of beings and their metal aircraft, but seated on a grassy plot in the left foreground of the picture was a small group of the white-feathered, red-skinned inhabitants of this strange land. In the distance rose the temple-crowned crags. One figure alone stood, and with a magnificent gesture held arms aloft. The great corona of feathers spread following the line of the arms like the open wings of a great eagle. The

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The STORY of the LATE Mr. ELVESHAM
By H. G. Wells

Author of "First Men in the Moon," "The Time Machine," etc.

. . . I tottered to the glass and saw—Elvesham's face! I cannot describe its desolate decrepitude, the hollow cheeks, the straggling tail of dirty gray hair, the rheumy cheeks, the quivering, shrivelled lips. . . .

I SET this story down, not expecting it will be believed, but, if possible, to prepare a way of escape for the next victim. He, perhaps, may profit by my misfortune. My own case, I know, is hopeless, and I am now in some measure prepared to meet my fate.

My name is Edward George Eden. I was born at Trentham, in Staffordshire, my father being employed in the gardens there. I lost my mother when I was three years old, and my father when I was five, my uncle, George Eden, then adopting me as his own son. He was a single man, self-educated, and well-known in Birmingham as an enterprising journalist; he educated me generously, fired my ambition to succeed in the world, and at his death, which happened four years ago, left me his entire fortune, a matter of about five hundred pounds after all outgoing charges were paid. I was then eighteen. He advised me in his will to expend the money in completing my education. I had already chosen the profession of medicine, and through his posthumous generosity and my good fortune in a scholarship competition, I became a medical student at University College, London. At the time of the beginning of my story I lodged at 11A University Street in a little upper room, very shabbily furnished and draughty, overlooking the back of Shoolbred's premises*. I used this little room both to live in and sleep in, because I was anxious to eke out my means to the very last shillingsworth.

WE present our readers with a real mystery story, and perhaps one of the strangest you have ever read. Incidentally, it is this story, we believe, that laid the basis of the plot for "Station X," by Winsor MacLeod. We do not know whether Mr. MacLeod ever read "The Story of the Late Mr. Elvesham," but the coincidences in the two stories in places are certainly close. Where the Martians in the MacLeod story accomplished certain results by hypnotism, Wells gets similar results by means of drugs. We believe Mr. Wells wrote this story before Mr. MacLeod wrote his, and the story will make a profound impression upon you, due to its unusual and extraordinary plot.

I was taking a pair of shoes to be mended at a shop in the Tottenham Court Road when I first encountered the little old man with the yellow face, with whom my life has

*One of the great London department stores.

now become so inextricably entangled. He was standing at the curb, and staring at the number on the door in a doubtful way, as I opened it. His eyes—they were dull gray eyes, and reddish under the rims—fell to my face, and his countenance immediately assumed an expression of corrugated amiability.

"You come," he said, "apt to the moment. I had forgotten the number of your house. How do you do, Mr. Eden?"

I was a little astonished at his familiar address, for I had never set eyes on the man before. I was a little annoyed, too, at his catching me with my boots under my arm. He noticed my lack of cordiality.

"Wonder who the deuce I am, eh? A friend, let me assure you. I have seen you before, though you haven't seen me. Is there anywhere where I can talk to you?"

I hesitated. The shabbiness of my room upstairs was not a matter for every stranger. "Perhaps," said I, "we might walk down the street. I'm unfortunately prevented——" My gesture explained the sentence before I had spoken it.

"The very thing," he said, and faced this way, and then that. "The street? Which way shall we go?" I slipped my boots down in the passage. "Look here!" he said abruptly; "this business of mine is a rigmarole. Come and lunch with me, Mr. Eden. I'm an old man, a very old man, and not good at explanations, and what with my piping voice and the clatter of the traffic——"

He laid a persuasive skinny hand that trembled a little upon my arm.

I was not so old that an old man might not treat me to a lunch. Yet at the same time I was not altogether pleased by this abrupt invitation. "I had rather——" I began. "But I had rather," he said, catching me up, "and a certain civility is surely due to my gray hairs."

And so I consented, and went with him.

He took me to Blavitiski's; I had to walk slowly to accommodate myself to his paces; and over such a lunch as I had never tasted before, he fended off my leading question, and I took a better note of his appearance. His clean-shaven face was lean and wrinkled, his shrivelled lips fell over a set of false teeth, and his white hair was thin and rather long; he seemed small to me—though indeed, most people seemed small to me—and his shoulders were rounded and bent. And watching him, I could not help but observe that he too was taking note of me, running his eyes, with a curious touch of greed in them, over me, from my broad shoulders to my sun-tanned hands, and up to my freckled face again. "And now," said he, as we lit our cigarettes, "I will tell you of the business in hand."

"I must tell you, then, that I am an old man, a very old man." He paused momentarily. "And it happens that I have money that I must presently be leaving, and never a child have I to leave it to." I thought of the confidence game, and resolved I would be on the alert for the vestiges of my five hundred pounds. He proceeded to enlarge on his loneliness, and the trouble he had to find a proper disposition of his money. "I have weighed this plan and that plan, charities, institutions, and scholarships, and libraries, and I have come to this conclusion at last," —he fixed his eyes on my face—"that I will find some young fellow, ambitious, pure-minded, and poor, healthy in body and healthy in mind, and, in short, make him my heir, give him all that I have." He repeated, "Give him all that I have. So that he will suddenly be lifted out of all the trouble and struggle in which his sympathies have been educated, to freedom and influence."

I tried to seem disinterested. With a transparent hypocrisy I said, "And you want my help, my professional services maybe, to find that person."

He smiled, and looked at me over his cigarette, and I laughed at his quiet exposure of my modest pretense.

"What a career such a man might have!" he said. "It fills me with envy to think how I have accumulated that another man may spend——

"But there are conditions, of course, burdens to be imposed. He must, for instance, take my name. You cannot expect everything without some return. And I must go into all the circumstances of his life before I can accept him. He *must* be sound. I must know his heredity, how his parents and grandparents died, have the strictest inquiries made into his private morals."

This modified my secret congratulations a little.

"And do I understand," said I, "that I——"

"Yes," he said, almost fiercely. "You. *You.*"

I answered never a word. My imagination was dancing wildly, my innate scepticism was useless to modify its transports. There was not a particle of gratitude in my mind—I did not know what to say nor how to say it. "But why me in particular?" I said at last.

He had chanced to hear of me from Professor Haslar, he said, as a typically sound and sane young man, and he wished, as far as possible, to leave his money where health and integrity were assured.

THAT was my first meeting with the little old man. He was mysterious about himself; he would not give his name yet, he said, and after I had answered some questions of his, he left me at the Blavitiski portal. I noticed that he drew a handful of gold coins from his pocket when it came to paying for the lunch. His insistence upon bodily health was curious. In accordance with an arrangement we had made I applied that day for a life policy in the Loyal Insurance Company for a large sum, and I was exhaustively overhauled by the medical advisers of that company in the subsequent week. Even that did not satisfy him, and he insisted I must be re-examined by the great Doctor Henderson.

It was Friday in Whitsun week before he came to a decision. He called me down, quite late in the evening—nearly nine it was—from cramming chemical equations for my Preliminary Scientific Examination. He was standing in the passage under the feeble gas-lamp, and his face was a grotesque interplay of shadows. He seemed more bowed than when I had first seen him, and his cheeks had sunk in a little.

His voice shook with emotion. "Everything is satisfactory, Mr. Eden," he said. "Everything is quite, quite satisfactory. And this night of all nights, you must dine with me and celebrate your

—accession." He was interrupted by a cough. "You won't have long to wait, either," he said, wiping his handkerchief across his lips, and gripping my hand with his long bony claw that was disengaged. "Certainly not very long to wait."

We went into the street and called a cab. I remember every incident of that drive vividly, the swift, easy motion, the vivid contrast of gas and oil and electric light, the crowds of people in the streets, the place in Regent Street to which we went, and the sumptuous dinner we were served with there. I was disconcerted at first by the well-dressed waiter's glances at my rough clothes, bothered by the stones of the olives, but as the champagne warmed my blood, my confidence revived. At first the old man talked of himself. He had already told me his name in the cab; he was Egbert Elvesham, the great philosopher, whose name I had known since I was a lad at school. It seemed incredible to me that this man, whose intelligence had so early dominated mine, this great abstraction, should suddenly realize itself as this decrepit, familiar figure. I dare say every young fellow who has suddenly fallen among celebrities has felt something of my disappointment. He told me now of the future that the feeble streams of his life would presently leave dry for me, houses, copyrights, investments; I had never suspected that philosophers were so rich. He watched me eat and drink with a touch of envy. "What a capacity for living you have!" he said; and then with a sigh, a sigh of relief I could have thought it, "it will not be long."

"Ay," said I, my head swimming now with champagne; "I have a future perhaps—of a passing agreeable sort, thanks to you. I shall now have the honor of your name. But you have a past. Such a past as is worth all my future."

He shook his head and smiled, as I thought, with half sad appreciation of my flattering admiration. "That future," he said, "would you in truth change it?" The waiter came with liqueurs. "You will not perhaps mind taking my name, taking my position, but would you indeed—willingly—take my years?"

"With your achievements," said I gallantly.

He smiled again. "Kümmel—both," he said to the waiter, and turned his attention to a little paper packet he had taken from his pocket. "This hour," said he, "this after-dinner hour is the hour of small things. Here is a scrap of my unpublished wisdom." He opened the packet with his shaking yellow fingers, and showed a little pinkish powder on the paper. "This," said he—"well, you must guess what it is. But Kümmel—put a dash of this powder in it—is Himmel."

His large grayish eyes watched mine with an inscrutable expression.

It was a bit of a shock to me to find this great teacher gave his mind to the flavor of liqueurs. However, I feigned an interest in his weakness, for I was drunk enough for such small sycophancy.

He parted the powder between the little glasses, and, rising suddenly, with a strange, unexpected dignity, held out his hand towards me. I imitated his action, and the glasses rang. "To a quick succession," said he, and raised his glass towards his lips.

"Not that," I said hastily. "Not that."

He paused with the liqueur at the level of his chin, and his eyes blazing into mine.

"To a long life," said I.

He hesitated. "To a long life," said he, with a sudden bark of laughter, and with eyes fixed on one another we tilted the little glasses. His eyes looked straight into mine, and as I drained the stuff off, I felt a curiously intense sensation. The first touch of it set my brain in a furious tumult; I seemed to feel an actual physical stirring in my skull, and a seething humming filled my ears. I did not notice the flavor in my mouth, the aroma that filled my throat; I saw only the gray intensity of his gaze that burnt into mine. The draught, the mental confusion, the noise and stirring in my head, seemed to last an interminable time. Curious vague impressions of half-forgotten things danced and vanished on the edge of my consciousness. At last he broke the spell. With a sudden explosive sigh he put down his glass.

"Well?" he said.

"It's glorious," said I, though I had not tasted the stuff.

My head was spinning. I sat down. My brain was chaos. Then my perception grew clear and minute as though I saw things in a concave mirror. His manner seemed to have changed into something nervous and hasty. He pulled out his watch and grimaced at it. "Eleven-seven! And to-night I must—Seven-twenty-five. Waterloo!* I must go at once." He called for the bill, and struggled with his coat. Officious waiters came to our assistance. In another moment I was wishing him good-bye, over the apron of a cab, and still with an absurd feeling of minute distinctness, as though—how can I express it?—I not only saw but *felt* through an inverted opera-glass.

"That stuff," he said. He put his hand to his forehead. "I ought not to have given it to you. It will make your head split to-morrow. Wait a minute. Here." He handed me out a little flat thing like a Seidlitz powder. "Take that in water as you are going to bed. The other thing was a drug. Not till you're ready to go to bed, mind. It will clear your head. That's all. One more shake—Futurus!"

I gripped his shrivelled claw. "Good-bye," he said, and by the droop of his eyelids I judged he too was a little under the influence of that brain-twisting cordial.

He recollected something else with a start, felt in his breast-pocket, and produced another packet, this time, a cylinder the size and shape of a shaving-stick. "Here," said he. "I'd almost forgotten. Don't open this until I come tomorrow—but take it now."

It was so heavy that I wellnigh dropped it. "All ri'!" said I, and he grinned at me through the cab window as the cabman flicked his horse into wakefulness. It was a white packet he had given me, with red seals at either end and along its edge. "If this isn't money," said I, "it's platinum or lead."

*One of the principal London railroad stations.

I STUCK it with elaborate care into my pocket, and with a whirling brain walked home through the Regent Street loiterers and the dark back streets beyond Portland Road. I remember the sensations of that walk very vividly, strange as they were. I was still so far myself that I could notice my strange mental state, and wonder whether this stuff I had had was opium—a drug beyond my experience. It is hard now to describe the peculiarity of my mental strangeness—mental doubling vaguely expresses it. As I was walking up Regent Street I found in my mind a queer persuasion that it was Waterloo Station, and had an odd impulse to get into the Polytechnic as a man might get into a train. I put a knuckle in my eye, and it was Regent Street. How can I express it? You see a skilful actor looking quietly at you, he pulls a grimace, and lo!—another person. Is it too extravagant if I tell you that it seemed to me as if Regent Street had, for the moment, done that? Then, being persuaded it was Regent Street again, I was oddly muddled about some fantastic reminiscences that cropped up. "Thirty years ago," thought I, "it was here that I quarrelled with my brother." Then I burst out laughing, to the astonishment and encouragement of a group of night prowlers. Thirty years ago I did not exist, and never in my life had I boasted a brother. The stuff was surely liquid folly, for the poignant regret for that lost brother still clung to me. Along Portland Road the madness took another turn. I began to recall vanished shops, and to compare the street with what it used to be. Confused, troubled thinking is comprehensible enough after the drink I had taken, but what puzzled me were these curiously vivid phantasm memories that had crept into my mind, and not only the memories that had crept in, but also the memories that had slipped out. I stopped opposite Stevens's, the natural history dealer's, and cudgelled my brains to think what he had to do with me. A 'bus went by, and sounded exactly like the rumbling of a train. I seemed to be dipping into some dark, remote pit for the recollection. "Of course," said I, at last, "he has promised me three frogs tomorrow. Odd I should have forgotten."

Do they still show children dissolving views? In those I remember one view would begin like a faint ghost, and grow and oust another. In just that way it seemed to me that a ghostly set of new sensations was struggling with those of my ordinary self.

I went on through Euston Road to Tottenham Court Road, puzzled, and a little frightened, and scarcely noticed the unusual way I was taking, for commonly I used to cut through the intervening network of back streets. I turned into University Street, to discover that I had forgotten my number. Only by a strong effort did I recall 11A, and even then it seemed to me that it was a thing some forgotten person had told me. I tried to steady my mind by recalling the incidents of the dinner, and for the life of me I could conjure up no picture of my host's face; I saw him only as a shadowy outline, as one might see oneself reflected in a window through which one was looking. In his place, however, I had a curious exterior vision of myself, sitting at a table, flushed, bright-eyed, and talkative.

"I must take this other powder," said I. "This is getting impossible."

I tried the wrong side of the hall for my candle and the matches, and had a doubt of which landing my room might be on. "I'm drunk," I said, "that's certain," and blundered needlessly on the staircase to sustain the proposition.

At the first glance my room seemed unfamiliar. "What rot!" I said, and stared about me. I seemed to bring myself back by the effort, and the odd phantasmal quality passed into the concrete familiar. There was the old glass still, with my notes on the albumens stuck in the corner of the frame, my old everyday suit of clothes pitched about the floor. And yet it was not so real after all. I felt an idiotic persuasion trying to creep into my mind, as it were, that I was in a railway carriage in a train just stopping, that I was peering out of the window at some unknown station. I gripped the bed-rail firmly to reassure myself. "It's clairvoyance, perhaps," I said. "I must write to the Psychical Research Society."

I put the rouleau on my dressing-table, sat on my bed, and began to take off my boots. It was as if the picture of my present sensations was painted over some other picture that was trying to show through. "Curse it!" said I; "my wits are going, or am I in two places at once?" Half-undressed, I tossed the powder into a glass and drank it off. It effervesced, and became a fluorescent amber color. Before I was in bed my mind was already tranquillized. I felt the pillow at my cheek, and thereupon I must have fallen asleep.

I AWOKE abruptly out of a dream of strange beasts, and found myself lying on my back. Probably everyone knows that dismal, emotional dream from which one escapes, awake indeed, but strangely cowed. There was a curious taste in my mouth, a tired feeling in my limbs, a sense of cutaneous discomfort. I lay with my head motionless on my pillow, expecting that my feeling of strangeness and terror would pass away, and that I should then doze off again to sleep. But instead of that, my uncanny sensations increased. At first I could perceive nothing wrong about me. There was a faint light in the room, so faint that it was the very next thing to darkness, and the furniture stood out in it as vague blots of absolute darkness. I stared with my eyes just over the bedclothes.

It came into my mind that some one had entered the room to rob me of my rouleau of money, but after lying for some moments, breathing regularly to simulate sleep, I realized this was mere fancy Nevertheless, the uneasy assurance of something wrong kept fast hold of me. With an effort I raised my head from the pillow, and peered about me at the dark. What it was I could not conceive. I looked at the dim shapes around me, the greater and lesser darknesses that indicated curtains, table, fireplace, bookshelves, and so forth. Then I began to perceive something unfamiliar in the forms of the darkness. Had the bed turned round? Yonder should be the bookshelves, and something shrouded and pallid rose there, something that would not answer to the bookshelves, however I

looked at it. It was far too big to be my shirt thrown on a chair.

Overcoming a childish terror, I threw back the bed-clothes and thrust my leg out of bed. Instead of coming out of my truckle-bed upon the floor, I found my foot scarcely reached the edge of the mattress. I made another step, as it were, and sat up on the edge of the bed. By the side of my bed should be the candle, and the matches upon the broken chair. I put out my hand and touched—nothing. I waved my hand in the darkness and it came against some heavy hanging, soft and thick in texture, which gave a rustling noise at my touch. I grasped this and pulled it; it appeared to be a curtain suspended over the head of my bed.

I was now thoroughly awake, and beginning to realize that I was in a strange room. I was puzzled. I tried to recall the overnight circumstances, and I found them now, curiously enough, vivid in my memory: the supper, my reception of the little packages, my wonder whether I was intoxicated, my slow undressing, the coolness to my flushed face of my pillow. I felt a sudden distrust. Was that last night, or the night before? At any rate, this room was strange to me, and I could not imagine how I had got into it. The dim, pallid outline was growing paler, and I perceived it was a window, with the dark shape of an oval toilet-glass against the weak intimation of the dawn that filtered through the blind. I stood up, and was surprised by a curious feeling of weakness and unsteadiness. With trembling hands outstretched, I walked slowly towards the window, getting, nevertheless, a bruise on the knee from a chair by the way. I fumbled round the glass, which was large, with handsome brass sconces, to find the blind-cord. I could not find any. By chance I took hold of the tassel, and with the click of a spring the blind ran up.

I found myself looking out upon a scene that was altogether strange to me. The night was overcast, and through the flocculent gray of the heaped clouds there filtered a faint half-light of dawn. Just at the edge of the sky the cloud-canopy had a blood-red rim. Below, everything was dark and indistinct, dim hills in the distance, a vague mass of buildings running up into pinnacles, trees like spilt ink, and below the window a tracery of black bushes and pale gray paths. It was so unfamiliar that for the moment I thought myself still dreaming. I felt the toilet-table; it appeared to be made of some polished wood, and was rather elaborately furnished—there were little cut-glass bottles and a brush upon it. There was also a queer little object, horse-shoe shape it felt, with smooth, hard projections, lying in a saucer. I could find no matches or candlestick.

I turned my eyes to the room again. Now the blind was up, faint spectres of its furnishing came out of the darkness. There was a huge curtained bed, and the fireplace at its foot had a large white mantel with something of the shimmer of marble.

I leant against the toilet-table, shut my eyes and opened them again, and tried to think. The whole thing was far too real for dreaming. I was inclined to imagine there was still some hiatus in my memory, as a consequence of my draught of that strange liqueur; that I had come into my inheritance perhaps, and suddenly lost my recollection of everything since my good fortune had been announced. Perhaps if I waited a little, things would be clearer to me again. Yet my dinner with old Elvesham was now singularly vivid and recent. The champagne, the observant waiters, the powder, and the liqueurs—I could have staked my soul it all happened a few hours ago.

And then occurred a thing so trivial and yet so terrible to me that I shiver now to think of that moment. I spoke aloud. I said, "How the devil did I get here?" . . . *And the voice was not my own.*

It was not my own, it was thin, the articulation was slurred, the resonance of my facial bones was different. Then, to reassure myself I ran one hand over the other, and felt loose folds of skin, the bony laxity of age. "Surely," I said, in that horrible voice that had somehow established itself in my throat, "surely this thing is a dream!" Almost as quickly as if I did it involuntarily, I thrust my fingers into my mouth. My teeth had gone. My finger-tips ran on the flaccid surface of an even row of shrivelled gums. I was sick with dismay and disgust.

I felt then a passionate desire to see myself, to realize at once in its full horror the ghastly change that had come upon me. I tottered to the mantel and felt along it for matches. As I did so, a barking cough sprang up in my throat, and I clutched the thick flannel nightdress I found about me. There were no matches there, and I suddenly realized that my extremities were cold. Sniffing and coughing, whimpering a little, perhaps, I fumbled back to bed. "It is surely a dream," I whispered to myself as I clambered back, "surely a dream." It was a senile repetition. I pulled the bedclothes over my shoulders, over my ears, I thrust my withered hand under the pillow, and determined to compose myself to sleep. Of course it was a dream. In the morning the dream would be over, and I should wake up strong and vigorous again to my youth and studies. I shut my eyes, breathed regularly, and, finding myself wakeful, began to count slowly through the powers of three.

But the thing I desired would not come. I could not get to sleep. And the persuasion of the inexorable reality of the change that had happened to me grew steadily. Presently I found myself with my eyes wide open, the powers of three forgotten, and my skinny fingers upon my shrivelled gums. I was, indeed, suddenly and abruptly, an old man. I had in some unaccountable manner fallen through my life and come to old age, in some way I had been cheated of all the best of my life, of love, of struggle, of strength, and hope. I grovelled into the pillow and tried to persuade myself that such hallucination was possible. Imperceptibly, steadily, the dawn grew clearer.

At last, despairing of further sleep, I sat up in bed and looked about me. A chill twilight rendered the whole chamber visible. It was spacious and well-furnished, better furnished than any room I had ever slept in before. A candle and matches became dimly visible upon a little pedestal in a recess. I threw back the bedclothes, and, shivering with the rawness of the early morning, albeit it was summer-time, I got out and lit the candle.

Then, trembling horribly, so that the extinguisher rattled on its spike—I tottered to the glass and saw—*Elvesham's* face! It was none the less horrible because I had already dimly feared as much. He had already seemed physically weak and pitiful to me, but seen now, dressed only in a coarse flannel nightdress, that fell apart and showed the stringy neck, seen now as my own body, I cannot describe its desolate decrepitude. The hollow cheeks, the straggling tail of dirty gray hair, the rheumy bleared eyes, the quivering, shrivelled lips, the lower displaying a gleam of the pink interior lining, and those horrible dark gums showing. You who are mind and body together, at your natural years, cannot imagine what this fiendish imprisonment meant to me. To be young and full of the desire and energy of youth, and to be caught, and presently to be crushed in this tottering ruin of a body. . . .

But I wander from the course of my story. For some time I must have been stunned at this change that had come upon me. It was daylight when I did so far gather myself together as to think. In some inexplicable way I had been changed, though how, short of magic, the thing had been done, I could not say. And as I thought, the diabolical ingenuity of Elvesham came home to me. It seemed plain to me that as I found myself in his, so he must be in possession of *my* body, of my strength, that is, and my future. But how to prove it? Then, as I thought, the thing became so incredible, even to me, that my mind reeled, and I had to pinch myself, to feel my toothless gums, to see myself in the glass, and touch the things about me, before I could steady myself to face the facts again. Was all life hallucination? Was I indeed Elvesham, and he me? Had I been dreaming of Eden overnight? Was there any Eden? But if I was Elvesham, I should remember where I was on the previous morning, the name of the town in which I lived, what happened before the dream began. I struggled with my thoughts. I recalled the queer doubleness of my memories overnight. But now my mind was clear. Not the ghost of any memories but those proper to Eden could I raise.

"This way lies insanity!" I cried in my piping voice. I staggered to my feet, dragged my feeble, heavy limbs to the washhand-stand, and plunged my gray head into a basin of cold water. Then, towelling myself, I tried again. It was no good. I felt beyond all question that I was indeed Eden, not Elvesham. But Eden in Elvesham's body!

Had I been a man of any other age, I might have given myself up to my fate as one enchanted. But in these sceptical days miracles do not pass current. Here was some trick of psychology. What a drug and a steady stare could do, a drug and a steady stare, or some similar treatment, could surely undo. Men have lost their memories before. But to exchange memories as one does umbrellas! I laughed. Alas! not a healthy laugh, but a wheezing, senile titter. I could have fancied old Elvesham laughing at my plight, and a gust of petulant anger, unusual to me, swept across my feelings. I began dressing eagerly in the clothes I found lying about on the floor, and realized when I was dressed that it was an evening suit I had assumed. I opened the wardrobe and found some ordinary clothes, a pair of plaid trousers, and an old-fashioned dressing-gown. I put a venerable smoking-cap on my venerable head, and, coughing a little from my exertions, tottered out upon the landing.

It was then, perhaps, a quarter to six, and the blinds were closely drawn and the house quite silent. The landing was a spacious one, a broad, richly-carpeted staircase went down into the darkness of the hall below, and before me a door ajar showed me a writing-desk, a revolving bookcase, the back of a study chair, and a fine array of bound books, shelf upon shelf.

"My study," I mumbled, and walked across the landing. Then at the sound of my voice a thought struck me, and I went back to the bedroom and put in the set of false teeth. They slipped in with the ease of old habit. "That's better," said I, gnashing them, and so returned to the study.

The drawers of the writing-desk were locked. Its revolving top was also locked. I could see no indications of the keys and there were none in the pockets of my trousers. I shuffled back at once to the bedroom, and went through the dress-suit, and afterwards the pockets of all the garments I could find. I was very eager, and one might have imagined that burglars had been at work, to see my room when I had done. Not only were there no keys to be found, but not a coin, nor a scrap of paper—save only the receipted bill of the overnight dinner.

A curious weariness asserted itself. I sat down and stared at the garments flung here and there, their pockets turned inside out. My first frenzy had already flickered out. Every moment I was beginning to realize the immense intelligence of the plans of my enemy, to see more and more clearly the hopelessness of my position. With an effort I rose and hurried hobbling into the study again. On the staircase was a housemaid pulling up the blinds. She stared, I think, at the expression of my face. I shut the door of the study behind me, and, seizing a poker, began an attack upon the desk. That is how they found me. The cover of the desk was split, the lock smashed, the letters torn out of the pigeon-holes and tossed about the room. In my senile rage I had flung about the pens and other such light stationery, and overturned the ink. Moreover, a large vase upon the mantel had got broken—I do not know how. I could find no cheque-book, no money, no indications of the slightest use for the recovery of my body. I was battering madly at the drawers, when the butler, backed by two women-servants, intruded upon me.

THAT simply is the story of my change. No one will believe my frantic assertions. I am treated as one demented, and even at this moment I am under restraint. But I am sane, absolutely sane, and to prove it I have sat down to write this story minutely as the things happened to me. I appeal to the reader, whether there is any trace of insanity in the style or method of the story he has been reading. I am a young man locked away in an old man's body. But the clear fact is incredible to everyone. Naturally I appear demented to those

who will not believe this, naturally I do not know the names of my secretaries, of the doctors who come to see me, of my servants and neighbors, of this town (wherever it is) where I find myself. Naturally I lose myself in my own house and suffer inconveniences of every sort. Naturally I ask the oddest questions. Naturally I weep and cry out, and have paroxysms of despair. I have no money and no cheque-book. The bank will not recognize my signature, for I suppose that, allowing for the feeble muscles I now have, my handwriting is still Eden's. These people about me will not let me go to the bank personally. It seems, indeed, that there is no bank in this town, and that I have an account in some part of London. It seems that Elvesham kept the name of his solicitor secret from all his household. I can ascertain nothing. Elvesham was, of course, a profound student of mental science, and all my declarations of the facts of the case merely confirm the theory that my insanity is the outcome of overmuch brooding upon psychology. Dreams of the personal identity indeed! Two days ago I was a healthy youngster, with all life before me; now I am a furious old man, unkempt, and desperate, and miserable, prowling about a great, luxurious, strange house, watched, feared, and avoided as a lunatic by every one about me. And in London is Elvesham beginning life again in a vigorous body and with all the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of threescore and ten. He has stolen my life.

What has happened I do not clearly know. In the study are volumes of manuscript notes referring chiefly to the psychology of memory, and parts of what may be either calculations or ciphers in symbols absolutely strange to me. In some passages there are indications that he was also occupied with the philosophy of mathematics. I take it he has transferred the whole of his memories, the accumulation that makes up his personality, from this old withered brain of his to mine, and, similarly, that he has transferred mine to his discarded tenement. Practically, that is, he has changed bodies. But how such a change may be possible is without the range of my philosophy. I have been a materialist for all my thinking life, but here, suddenly, is a clear case of man's detachability from matter.

One desperate experiment I am about to try. I sit writing here before putting the matter to issue. This morning, with the help of a table-knife that I had secreted at breakfast, I succeeded in breaking open a fairly obvious secret drawer in this wrecked writing desk. I discovered nothing save a little green glass phial containing a white powder. Round the neck of the phial was a label, and thereon was written this one word, *"Release."* This may be—is most probably—poison. I can understand Elvesham placing poison in my way, and I should be sure that it was his intention so to get rid of the only living witness against him, were it not for this careful concealment. The man has practically solved the problem of immortality. Save for the spite of chance, he will live in my body until it has aged, and then, again, throwing it aside, he will assume some other victim's youth and strength. When one remembers his heartlessness, it is terrible to think of the ever-growing experience that . . . How long has he been leaping from body to body? . . . But I tire of writing. The powder appears to be soluble in water. The taste is not unpleasant.

There the narrative found upon Mr. Elvesham's desk ends. His dead body lay between the desk and the chair. The latter had been pushed back, probably by his last convulsions. The story was written in pencil, and in a crazy hand, quite unlike his usual minute characters. There remain only two curious facts to record. Indisputably there was some connection between Eden and Elvesham, since the whole of Elvesham's property was bequeathed to the young man. But he never inherited. When Elvesham committed suicide, Eden was, strangely enough, already dead. Twenty-four hours before, he had been knocked down by a cab and killed instantly, at the crowded crossing at the intersection of Gower Street and Euston Road. So that the only human being who could have thrown light upon this fantastic narrative is beyond the reach of questions. Without further comment I leave this extraordinary matter to the reader's individual judgment.

THE END.

Secrets Never Told

By LELAND S. COPELAND

How did you mingle your atoms,
  Forming the primitive cell,
Oxygen, Hydrogen, Carbon,
  How did you manage so well?
Whence came the wonderful essence,
  Life of the ages to be?
Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Sulphur,
  Whisper your secret to me.

Brought from the wreck of a planet,
  After a keenly cold ride
Found life at last resurrection
  Out of a meteor's side?
Or driven by light through the ether,
  Woke it to thrive on the earth?
Chromatin, Protoplasm,
  Tell me the truth of your birth.

Perhaps on the globe life was hiding,
  Scattered in rock and in air;
Braving the heat of the hollows
  Long ere the ocean was there;
Waiting for cycles the moment
  To gather itself and be born.
Water, you mother of being,
  Sing of the soul at its morn.

The LOST COMET

By Ronald M. Sherin

. . . But with the disappearance of the sun, twilight did not ensue. Instead, a weird, phosphorescent brilliance took its place. The awful proximity of the cometary mass was now fully apparent. It occupied over a quarter of the entire sky. In the center, the disk of the nucleus could be clearly discerned, while the glowing coma shot out by the expulsion of light seemed nothing less than the fiery breath of some dragon of antiquity.

I.

IN the library of a small observatory, two men were seated before a table. Before them was spread out a huge chart, upon which rested several large and well thumbed star catalogues bearing various dates and titles. The elder of the two men, whose strikingly intellectual countenance indicated a mind of no ordinary capacity, and whose age might have been anywhere between forty-five and sixty, was busily engaged in drawing geometrical diagrams and comparing his results with a row of figures which lay before him. His companion, a tall dark man, still in the prime of life, was gazing anxiously at the outspread chart, apparently endeavoring to satisfy himself upon some point of which he was uncertain. Anyone possessing an elementary knowledge of astronomy, would at once have recognized it as a chart of the solar system drawn upon a large scale; and if his knowledge of celestial mechanics extended a little further, he would have known the curious wavy lines about the central part of the diagram to have been the orbits of more than a hundred comets which had at some time in the past visited the solar system.

Presently the mathematician drew a mark upon the chart, dropped his pen, and for a moment gazed at his companion in amazement and wonder. The latter spoke at last: "It is true, then, this thing which we had both expected, and yet dared to hope false. Are you sure there isn't still some possibility of error in our calculations?"

"My friend," replied the other suddenly rising from his chair with an air of impatience, "the result of tonight's work cannot be in error unless the new science of mathematics to which I have devoted twenty years of my life, is false. But perhaps you doubt the truth of my new system of cometary geometry?"

"No," said his companion eagerly, "I shall never doubt that, professor; for although an unbelieving world refuses to recognize the greatest mathematical genius that has lived upon this planet since the time of Newton, I, Jean Bourget, humble s t a r - g a z e r and visionary though I am, salute you in the name of Urania, the immortal muse of astronomy. Never, since the first demonstration, have I doubted; the laws of the new geometry have appeared to me as inexorable as those of nature herself. In short, dear master, you have only to speak. My part shall be to listen, to believe and to obey."

"Attend, then, to what I am about to relate," replied Professor Montesquieux, for such was his name. "You of course know that Biela, an officer in the Austrian army, accidentally discovered a new comet on the evening of February 27th, 1826. This comet was carefully observed by contemporary astronomers, and it was soon assigned a period ranging between six and seven years. Between 1826 and 1845 it made two regular appearances, but in the latter year it was seen to separate into two distinct parts.

"True to its old period, the comet returned in 1852; but this time its components were over a million miles apart. Then it disappeared. But in 1872, after it had twice failed to reappear, there came from the very region of the cometary path one of the most brilliant meteor showers ever recorded in astronomical history. Klinkerfues of Berlin assumed this display to be due to a direct encounter between the disintegrated comet and the earth; but, strange to say, the mysterious visitor was shortly afterwards observed to be retreating towards Theta Centauri in the southern heavens.

"Now the question was, what had become of Biela's comet? Where had it gone? Astronomers with but the most crude and elementary mathematical science at their command, naturally were obliged to accept a simple answer. In fact, all they had to say was that the comet had conveniently disintegrated. This explanation was simplicity itself, and who would be the wiser? Assuredly not the public; for were not the public always delighted with that which least taxed their power of comprehension? Consequently, the memory of Biela's comet has died, except in the minds of a few observers who understand the meaning of the late November meteor showers, which occur at regular periodic intervals coinciding with the former period of the comet."

As Montesquieux paused, Bourget asked: "And these showers do not explain everything? Do they offer no proof of the comet's disintegration?"

"Ah, my friend," resumed the professor rapidly, "I perceive that you are but little acquainted with the deeper mysteries of cometary geometry, even though your intentions are excellent. Proof indeed! What does the November meteor shower prove except that this miserable fragment of the great comet continues to follow the path of its ancient e l l i p s e, showering the earth with a few infinitesimal particles during perihelion? But I tell you that is not the real comet; *for the principal p a r t of Biela's c o m e t never disintegrated!* And our learned geometricians, with their play circles, their hyperbolas, their parabolas and their curved planes, what do they know about the laws of cometary geometry? Do they think that nature must necessarily follow their childish lines? I, Alphonse Montesquieux, denounce them all. They have scorned, ridiculed and rejected the laws I have revealed, but the day of reckoning is close at hand.

"Now listen to this: when Biela's comet divided in 1845, the smaller fragment continued in its old course; but the main body was deflected and changed its orbit. A real mathematician would have perceived this during its last appearance in 1852, when the two nuclei were already over a million miles apart. *But Biela's comet is at last coming back, and it will strike the earth exactly upon*

MOST of us have heard about comets, but very few of us have ever seen one. As is well known, there has been a great deal of superstition about comets in the past, and the most dire things have been predicted, when one of them approached the earth sufficiently near to become visible to the naked eye. In the past, comets have been associated with pestilences, wars, and other great calamities, much of this, of course, being based upon superstition. The present story by our new author is excellent for any one who wants to brush up his knowledge of comets in general with a quantum of good fiction thrown in for good measure.

the vernal equinox, six months from today! My calculations cannot err: I have mathematically deduced its greatly elongated orbit and proved the point in which it must appear within a second of arc. Taking into account the speed of the earth's orbital revolution around the sun and the point where the approaching comet must intercept the terrestrial orbit before reaching perihelion, I find that a collision is inevitable. The earth, which has revolved unmolested in space for perhaps a billion years, is at last to receive a sudden visitor!"

"And the result of this collision," inquired Bourget, "will be what? Many astronomers have held that a comet's mass is not sufficient to cause serious damage to the earth. But even if we were to proclaim this news from the press, we should be doubted, for as we have demonstrated this evening, the highest telescopic power is inadequate to reveal the comet's presence, even though we know its right ascension and declination with certainty."

"True," replied Montesquieux thoughtfully, "and the public would not remember the 'wonder comet' of 1843, which Boguslawski observed to possess a tail 600,000,000 miles in length and traveling at the rate of 100,000 miles per second, thus approaching the speed of light itself. Neither would they remember the remarkable comet of Lexell, which missed the earth by scarcely 1,500,000 miles on July 1, 1770. Do you know what would have happened if this comet had crossed the terrestrial orbit twenty-two hours sooner? The earth travels nineteen miles per second or 68,400 miles per hour. A period of twenty-two hours therefore represents approximately 1,500,000 miles—a narrow margin to say the least—but with my comet, or Bielas' comet, whichever you prefer to call it, there will be no such escape. And do not think that comets are so harmless as optimistic astronomers teach. The density of comets, like that of planets, varies with age and chemical constitution. The coming comet possesses a nucleus of considerable density, as its attractive power and gravitational resistance clearly prove. All comets contain carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen and oxygen, but the relative proportions in which these elements are compounded are not known; consequently there can be no certainty regarding the effect of cometary gases upon terrestrial atmosphere and organisms. My opinion, however, is that these elements, combined with a new substance which I strongly suspect to exist within comets, would be absolutely fatal to organic life based upon amorphous carbon. The conclusion, therefore, is evident: terrestrial humanity is about to come to an end, even though the earth itself is not totally destroyed."

Bourget gazed at the professor for a moment in silence. Finally he spoke: "I believe you; I cannot doubt. But what is to be done?"

"Our duty," resumed Montesquieux, "is to do all that lies within our power to warn the public. If chemists could only be made to believe, perhaps even yet there might be time for the discovery of a means of protection against the cometary gas. However, I shall advise the press of my conclusion tomorrow, and in the interests of humanity I shall again risk humiliation by applying for a hearing before the National Academy of Science. With your assistance, I shall at once draw up my report, which must be presented at the next meeting of the Academy ten days from this date."

A few moments later Professor Montesquieux was rapidly dictating, while Bourget, who acted in the capacity of secretary, wrote hurriedly upon a paper which lay before him.

II.

TWO days after the interview described in the preceding chapter, the following account appeared in the morning edition of *La France*, a leading Paris daily:

"SAVANT PREDICTS END OF WORLD
Claims Lost Comet Which Vanished in 1852
About to Return and Destroy Earth;
Scientists Pay No Attention
to Warning

"Paris, Oct. 23.—Professor Alphonse Montesquieux, long known as an eccentric mathematician and astronomer, has announced the startling news that the earth is due for a sudden collision which will occur upon the exact date of the vernal equinox, March 21, 1931. The professor's amazing theory is based upon the division of Biela's comet, which occurred in 1845. Records show that the comet reappeared in 1852 with its component parts already 1,200,000 miles apart. It has never been observed since that date, although some astronomers believe that it was seen disappearing shortly after the brilliant meteor shower of 1872.

"The accepted theory has been that the comet had disintegrated, and this explanation is apparently borne out by the meteor showers that are regularly received when the comet's return is due. Montesquieux, however, believes that the larger portion of the comet was deflected and changed its orbit into an elongated ellipse with a period of seventy-eight years, and by the aid of his new 'cometary geometry' (a creation of his own), he claims to have demonstrated that the cometary path exactly coincides with the earth's position at the vernal equinox.

"We hasten to add that no corroboration of this wild theory has been received from scientific authorities. Upon receipt of the communication, reporters were immediately sent to interview several well-known astronomers residing in the city, who were unanimous in pronouncing the whole affair to be either a crudely planned hoax or the creation of a madman.

"It is said that Montesquieux's collaborator in this investigation is one Jean Bourget, an astronomer of doubtful standing, and that the pair have actually had the presumption to apply for a hearing before the National Academy of Science. Those acquainted with the professor's previous activities inform us that he was once accorded the privilege of reading a paper upon his new geometry to the same assembly; but the whole proceeding was so ludicrous that his hearers could not restrain themselves until the reading was over, whereupon Montesquieux retired in disgust, vowing never to enter the Academy again. There is little doubt that his second request will be refused, and there are already serious doubts regarding the professor's sanity."

THE day following this learned announcement, which was repeated in substance by the press all over the continent, Dr. Beauvais, president of the French Academy of Science, received the following communication:

Montesquieux Observatory
October 24, 1930.

Sir:—

I address you, not as one colleague to another, but in the name of the French nation and humanity. No other incentive could have moved me to the step I am taking. Two years ago I was publicly insulted by the august body which you represent. I then vowed never to return, but now I appeal for a hearing. Biela's comet is returning and the destruction of humanity is certain if preventive measures are not taken immediately. Your duty is clear. There is no time to lose; the proofs are in my possession and I shall expect an answer without delay.

Alphonse Montesquieux.

Now Dr. Beauvais had already seen the announcement in the daily press, and there was only one sentence that had made a strong impression upon his mind,—that regarding the professor's sanity. Consequently, when he had finished reading the extraordinary letter which had just been delivered to him, his countenance assumed a thoughtful expression. But his thoughts were far away from Biela's comet; for he was thinking only of the professor. "Strange man," he reflected, "a valuable brain gone mad and forever lost to science. But with his undeniably great scientific ability, what terrible destruction might he not be capable of doing should his deranged fancy take another turn. Should he be disappointed in his present hallucination, I fear he might take revenge by doing incalculable damage to the nation and even to humanity itself. Clearly, something must be done, and a refusal would only augment his insanity and leave him at large. No, he shall be admitted to the Academy; but I will be prepared. Fifteen minutes before a committee consisting of myself and the leading astronomers of the nation will be sufficient to test his absurd claims and show his derangement. And then I shall have a special council of alienists prepared to examine him. If the result be as I expect, I will see that he is immediately confined in an asylum for the insane, where he may propound his theories in safety, without danger to the public peace."

ONE week later the National Academy of Science was in session. True to his determination, Dr. Beauvais had called together the leading astronomers and mathematicians of France, and Professor Montesquiex had been granted fifteen minutes in which to present his theory to the learned assembly. The last speaker was just finishing his paper; when he was done, it would then be the professor's turn to speak.

Dr. Beauvais was fully prepared. Upon his right was seated Henri Valiére, director of the Paris Observatory; upon his left was René Beauchamp, the leading mathematician of France. In an antechamber of the building a selected group of mental specialists was waiting. Professor Montesquieux, accompanied by Jean Bourget, was seated in a conspicuous position in the upper end of the hall.

At length the speaker concluded. There was silence. The president rose, fixed his eyes upon the professor, and proceeded in his most majestic tone: "Alphonse Montesquieux, you have applied for a hearing before this assembly. You have been granted fifteen minutes in which to state your case. Proceed."

Professor Montesquieux arose, and without wasting time upon formalities, began:

"Gentlemen: Assuming two celestial objects whose common parent moved in an ellipse to be the results of an internal explosion, what orbits would they be most likely to follow? You will remember that, in mathematical researches upon the orbits of asteroids, it was universally assumed by astronomers that in case the minor planets were the remaining fragments of the ultra-Martian planet required by Bode's law, their orbits would, at some time in the past, have intersected the point where the explosion occurred. However, as investigation proved that such intersections had occurred only in relatively few cases, the existence of the hypothetical planet was considered disproved.

"In the point which I wish you to consider, I appeal to the same inexorable law of celestial mechanics. When Biela's comet divided in 1845, the same principle was involved. In 1852, when the comet reappeared, it was evident that the orbit of each nucleus had been changed; for the twin comets were already 1,200,000 miles apart. Further proof of this orbital change was furnished by the earth's collision with the disintegrated cometary fragment in 1872. We may assume, however, that as regards celestial distances, the orbit of this minor nucleus continued virtually the same, showering the earth with its debris at regular periodic intervals.

"But what became of the major nucleus? And, above all, what would have been the nature of its orbit? Some of you already know that, so far as celestial phenomena are concerned, I conceive both the parabola and the hyperbola to be physical and mathematical impossibilities. Cometary geometry allows of only one orbit,—the ellipse, so long as the nucleus is free from serious gravitational perturbation. Now, in accordance with the theorem first adduced, it follows that the divided fragments of Biela's comet must eventually pass through a common point of intersection. Let A'A represent the diameter of the original ellipse; let X be the point upon the orbit where the comet divided into the fragments B and C, and you will find that C, which has the more elongated orbit, must finally intersect the path of B at X'. X', gentlemen, is the precise point in space this planet will occupy at the vernal equinox next March. A collision is inevitable. The mathematical proofs of this catastrophe are here available for your inspection, and I strongly urge that suitable measures be taken to discover a means of protecting humanity against the poisonous gases which the impending collision will produce. My time is up. I thank you."

At this point, Professor Montesquieux walked to the president's chair, handed him the report which he had prepared, and quickly resumed his seat.

The impression produced upon the assembly by

the discourse they had just heard would be difficult to describe; but upon every countenance the same expression was visible. Stupefaction, wonder and amazement were written clearly upon the face of each member. Dr. Beauvais slowly took up the paper, and, after a momentary glance, handed the sheet to the mathematician at his left.

This learned gentleman, after scrutinizing the professor's calculations with a puzzled air, leaned confidentially toward the president. "Mad," he whispered, "these insane scribblings can be nothing else than the creations of a madman. I refuse to consider the matter further. If your measures are prepared, I advise that you proceed with them immediately."

The professor had made a fatal error, which could hardly have been avoided even if it had been foreseen. Being a mathematical genius, he had for years scorned the applied mathematics of his time and had evolved a new and revolutionary system from the realm of pure mathematics. Consequently, his symbols, although relatively simple, were intelligible only to himself and Bourget. Indeed, the conclusion which he had reached by the new method could not have been deduced or even expressed by ordinary mathematical symbols. It was, therefore, hardly surprising that a mathematician of the old school should utterly fail to grasp the meaning of the calculation. Professional pride, however, would not permit this fact to be recognized, and so like many another innovator, Montesquieux was to pay dearly for his temerity.

The president's features assumed a determined expression. Rising and beckoning to the professor, he said: "Monsieur Montesquieux, this matter must be discussed privately and at greater length. Will you have the kindness to follow me into the adjoining room?" Without suspecting the plot which had been laid against him, the professor rose from his seat and followed Dr. Beauvais out of the hall.

Two hours later the name Alphonse Montesquieux was officially registered in a secluded institution for the insane which was located a few miles outside of Paris.

III.

IN the latter part of February the astronomical world was on the *"qui vive."* On the twentieth of the month an English amateur astronomer named Huntington, had observed, while walking home during the late hours of the evening, a sight which caused him to stop short and gasp for breath. In the constellation Cassiopeiae, within three degrees of the spot where Tycho Brahe's famous temporary star had appeared in 1572, was a brilliant nova, already of the second magnitude. Realizing that his long desired opportunity to make his name known in astronomical history had arrived, the young man had rushed to the nearest telegraph station and hurriedly written the following message to the Greenwich Observatory:

LONDON, FEBRUARY 20, 1931
"SECOND MAGNITUDE NOVA JUST APPEARED NEAR KAPPA CASSIOPEIÆ."
HUNTINGTON.

That night telegraph lines and cables were kept busy by communications among observatories all over the world. Telescopes and spectroscopes were immediately turned upon the nova. And then a startling thing occurred. When the first large telescope was directed toward the new star, the astronomer rubbed his eyes in bewilderment; for instead of showing as a mere bright point of light as stars generally do, the diameter of this strange object increased tenfold when viewed through the telescope. An examination of the nova's spectra revealed another puzzling peculiarity. The majority of novae are either of solar type A or B—that is to say, white or blue stars of small density. But the spectrum lines of *Nova Cassiopeiae* seemed to indicate a solar type of class F or G, although there were many features which did not correspond with the composition of these stars.

Was the new visitor comet, planet or star? This was the question which astronomers were everywhere endeavoring to answer. Although some of the spectrum lines suggested a cometary nucleus, no definite coma or tail had been visible, and in consequence this explanation was abandoned. The theory of a new planet was entirely too fantastic for consideration. Consequently, the nova must be a new type of star, closely analogous to Nova Persei of 1901, which was surrounded by a luminous ring nebula. When, a few days later, the object was observed to be increasing in size and encircled by a nebulous halo, this explanation was greatly strengthened, for did not the nebula in Nova Persei expand in radius almost three seconds of arc per day? This theory was universally accepted by the entire scientific world.

In the meantime some amateur astronomer of a religious turn of mind had started the rumor that the celestial visitor was nothing less than the Star of Bethlehem returned to announce the coming of the Millennium, which millions of eager souls had so long been anxiously expecting. It was, in fact, the famous star seen by the Magi 1931 years before, and which had been observed in 945, 1264, and again in 1572 by the astronomer Tycho Brahe.

As the sensational always travels fastest and makes the best news, this wild rumor was given wide circulation. Religious sects founded upon the speedy approach of the Millennium were in the greatest excitement. In such communities all work was abandoned, ascension robes were prepared, and frenzied prayer and exhortation became the order of the day. Crowds of wild-eyed men and women began to roam the streets, chanting weird psalms and entreating passers-by to repent, fast and pray in preparation for the approaching Day of Judgment.

THE effect of all this upon the public mind soon became noticeable. Even conservative persons were at last becoming nervous, for the nova was undeniably increasing in size and brightness. In spite of the cold, large crowds of people could be seen watching the strange star on every clear evening. Nearly three weeks had passed since the discovery of the nova on February twentieth. Within a few days it had passed from a second magnitude star to a brilliance far exceeding that of Sirius. Astronomers were frankly puzzled. Each night they expected to find a decrease in the nova's mag-

nitude, in accordance with the usual fluctuations of novae. However, instead of declining, its brilliance steadily increased. To obtain an accurate parallax of the star required some little time, and although a few rough attempts had already been made, the results were far too startling to admit of serious consideration.

In London, the sky had been heavily overcast for several days, and the interest created by the phenomenon had almost disappeared in the ordinary course of human affairs. Only the astronomers were aware of the nova's progress, and they had no desire to arouse what they considered needless anxiety in the public mind.

But on March sixteenth, a most extraordinary thing happened. A sudden wind had sprung up early in the morning, and as all London was going to its daily occupations, a rift occurred among the flying cloudbands. And there, in broad daylight, shining brightly in the northern heavens, was Nova Cassiopeiae! City dwellers do not often waste their time in contemplation of the heavens, and for a few moments the sight was unnoticed. But a laborer who was obliged to lift his gaze in order to view some work being carried on in a building overhead, was the first to see it. For a moment he did not move, staring blankly. Slowly, without uttering a sound, he pointed toward the north. His companions, attracted by his strange attitude, gathered around him and looked in the direction he was pointing. Many who doubted the testimony of their own senses, rubbed their eyes and looked again. The Star was still there, its radiance causing it to appear a veritable miniature sun.

The news spread quickly, as if carried by a hidden electric current. Entire streets were blockaded; in many sections of the city all traffic had suddenly come to a stop. The cries of excited and hysterical women mingled with the clanging of tram-cars and the roar of motors. The windows of the great buildings were filled with thousands of heads. On the morning of the sixteenth business was paralyzed, and it was not until well into the afternoon that order was restored and men could continue their work. And even then, things were far from being normal. A strange feeling of uneasiness was in the air, and among the authorities some concern was felt lest the morning's excitement might result in a panic during the night.

In order to allay the nervousness of the public as much as possible, a statement was drawn up and signed by the Astronomer Royal of England. This proclamation, of which several thousand copies were immediately posted in conspicuous places, informed the people that although the size and brilliance of the new star were certainly unusual, many novae had been known to act strangely in the past and there was no cause whatever for alarm. It also announced that the object must be at least two or three hundred light years distant, so that the light they saw probably left its starting point during the days of Queen Elizabeth. In short, everything was explainable upon purely natural grounds, and there was, therefore, no possible danger to fear.

With the exception of a few sensational sheets, this notice was printed by the evening papers, together with other remarks of the same nature. Thus reassured, and the clouds having reappeared, people went home to their dinners feeling rather sheepish over their previous anxiety.

But another surprise was in store for them; for that evening the sky completely cleared, and behold! the nova's light exceeded even that of the moon. The city was illuminated almost as brightly as during the murky London day. Despite the assurances of the astronomers, the effect was ghastly. That night millions of the city's inhabitants stood gazing at the strange phenomenon and speaking to one another in subdued and frightened tones. The effect of the proclamation had worn off. The people were not so certain of the astronomers' infallibility.

What had occurred in London had happened in nearly every other city in the world. Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Leningrad, Rome and New York had all been shaken by the sight of the new star. Observatories, colleges and weather stations had been flooded with inquiries. Each day the press contained some new note of reassurance from the authorities.

The authorities, however, were no longer very sure of themselves. In all of this time, no one had thought of Biela's comet or Professor Montesquieux's prediction; but now that the date of the vernal equinox was almost at hand, an astronomer of the French Academy who had heard the professor's warning, voiced the opinion that the nova *might* be the predicted comet. This suggestion, which was at first ridiculed, gradually gained ground, and by the nineteenth of March, two days before the vernal equinox, the scientific world knew with certainty that the visitor was actually a comet approaching perihelion at a rapidly increasing speed.

It was at first intended that the news should be confined to scientific circles and not be made public, but as such news usually does, it soon leaked out and was made known to an already badly frightened world. Business was suspended. The evening of the nineteenth and the morning of the twentieth saw the most startling scenes ever witnessed among civilized people. Sleep was unthought of. Even the necessity of eating and drinking was forgotten. Churches, newspaper offices and centers of learning were filled and surrounded by fear-stricken mobs, eagerly snatching at the most wild and impossible rumors.

Early on the morning of the twentieth, the French Academy had hurriedly assembled at a notice from its president. As the scientists took their seats, their faces appeared drawn and haggard; yet there was no sign of fear. These men, who realized more fully than the crowd outside the real nature of the peril, were nevertheless calm and attentive. Dr. Beauvais slowly rose to address the assembly. His face was pale and deep circles were around his eyes, but his calm and self-assurance were perfect. Never had he appeared more worthy of the high position which he held.

"Gentlemen," he began, "at this, which is perhaps our last meeting, I have only one sentiment to express,—regret. I have failed in my duty, and the fault is solely my own. The only man capable of predicting the impending catastrophe was too great a genius for us to understand. Only one thing remains for me to do,—to make what restitution I can to the man I have so greatly injured. I go,

gentlemen, to the side of Alphonse Montesquieux, the world's greatest mathematical genius and the glory of the French race. Those who wish may follow."

IV.

PROFESSOR Montesquieux had taken his confinement quite philosophically, for he was given complete freedom in the establishment and he was certain that in a few months his prediction would be fully vindicated. Jean Bourget had been the professor's constant companion during the latter's retirement, and the two had spent many pleasant hours in perfecting the new mathematics and watching the approach of Nova Cassiopeiae after it had become visible. The professor had, moreover, followed the trend of events through the columns of the daily press, and while he was naturally moved to compassion at the panic caused by the approaching collision, he was nevertheless intensely interested in the results which this collision would produce. This sense of agreeable expectation at the approach of an impending catastrophe is peculiar only to the genuine man of science, and would be wholly unintelligible to the man of the world. The professor would have gladly given his life or done anything else in his power to avert the collision and save humanity, but as he could do nothing further, and as the catastrophe was no fault of his own, he felt a lively professional curiosity in the coming event.

Professor Montesquieux had expected a last moment visit from his scientific colleagues of the Academy, and in consequence he was not surprised when he saw several motor cars draw up in the driveway outside and his old enemy Dr. Beauvais step out of the foremost machine. In view of his victory and the approaching destruction of them all, the professor had lost all feeling of rancor toward his old enemies; indeed, he experienced a sort of professional pity for their ignorance. It was, therefore, with a smile of welcome that he met Dr. Beauvais at the door of the apartment.

"Alphonse Montesquieux," said the president simply, "can you forgive me?"

"Yes," replied the professor with some emotion, "I do forgive you most freely. The fault was mine as much as yours, for had I been less stubborn and put my calculations in more understandable form, the present situation might never have occurred. However, it is now too late for regrets. Let us lose no part of the mighty spectacle about to be presented to our eyes. I have a small telescope installed here which will serve for any observations we may care to make. Paris, I understand, is panic-stricken. Undisturbed observation would there be an impossibility. Let us remain here undisturbed, where science may observe. If the disaster is not complete, our observations may be of great value to the future."

The setting sun was just disappearing over the western horizon, its golden rays showering the earth for perhaps the last time in its history. But with the disappearance of the sun, twilight did not ensue. Instead, a weird, phosphorescent brilliance took its place. The awful proximity of the cometary mass was now fully apparent. It occupied over a quarter of the entire sky. In the center, the disk of the nucleus could be clearly discerned, while the glowing coma shot out by the expulsion of light seemed nothing less than the fiery breath of some dragon of antiquity.

The professor had calculated the comet's speed when near perihelion at not less than 100 miles per second. His observations showed that the nucleus was now approximately 2,500,000 miles distant from the ecliptic, its course being in a direct line with the earth's position at the vernal equinox. As the comet was traveling at the speed of 6,000 miles per minute or 360,000 miles per hour, it would strike the earth's orbit in about seven hours. The earth, moving at the rate of 68,400 miles per hour, would traverse the remaining 478,000 miles separating it from the equinox in exactly the same time. The collision, therefore, would be due at one o'clock in the morning, when the vernal equinox would have been reached.

The scientists watched through the long hours in almost unbroken silence. Awe and interest were mingled upon their faces, yet even now there was little fear. Trained in the observation of nature for years, they were not to be terrified by her manifestations.

By midnight the whole northern sky seemed to be on fire. The few first magnitude stars which had been visible in the early evening, had long since faded from sight, and the earth was now illuminated by a ghastly radiance apparently exceeding even that of sunlight. The atmosphere had at first felt sultry, and this had given place to steadily increasing heat.

In a small church located a short distance away, the bells were tolling. Inside devout peasants were lying paralyzed with fear. Heroic priests, upheld by their faith, were administering the last sacraments. But there was little response. As usually happens in cases of extreme fright, panic had been succeeded by temporary paralysis of the nervous system.

At five minutes to one, Professor Montesquieux and his companions witnessed the most striking spectacle ever recorded in the history of the world. The sky was now one complete ball of flame. Due to the intense heat and noxious cometary gases, the air was suffocating. Swarms of red and yellow meteors were everywhere striking the earth. Two minutes later the professor was blinded by a thousand brilliant streaks of light, and the heavy building reverberated as if it were undergoing a severe bombardment. Suddenly a terrific concussion was felt. The scientists were thrown violently to the floor. In the mind of Professor Montesquieux, everything turned red and then changed to blackness. He lost consciousness.

WHEN he awoke the first object of which he was aware was the bandaged head of Dr. Beauvais, who was leaning over him in eager solicitude. The room was illuminated by the feeble rays of a flickering wax candle. The majority of the men were still reclining where they had been thrown by the shock.

"And the comet?" inquired the professor as soon as he was able to speak.

"The earth," replied Dr. Beauvais solemnly, "is

saved. By an act of Providence the central nucleus of the comet missed the terrestrial surface by a distance which could not have exceeded 300 miles. The concussion we felt a few moments ago was due to debris emitted by the coma. The danger is now past. Much damage has undoubtedly been done, but nothing has occurred that cannot be repaired within a few month's time. And there, my friend," he continued, suddenly pointing to a broken window, "is the last I hope we shall ever see of this mad comet." And high in the southern heavens, its tail now clearly visible, was Biela's fast retreating comet, plunging headlong into space.

For a few moments the professor was lost in meditation. Finally he spoke. "Gentlemen," he said quietly, "I have made a serious and unforgivable mistake. This deviation in the comet's path is wholly accounted for by the perturbation caused in passing the Jovian orbit. How this could have been overlooked in my calculations I cannot conceive; but I offer both you and the world my most humble apology. And to think of the untold suffering and panic I might have prevented had I but foreseen this. But let the blame and the humiliation both be mine."

"But my dear Montesquieux," interrupted the president impatiently, "what madness is this? Do you not realize that your prediction has justly entitled you to be considered the foremost mathematician of the world? Think of the glory this will reflect upon France. Alphonse Montesquieux, the French Newton! The new mathematics will revolutionize the world!"

"No," replied the professor gravely, "I have failed. Although I rejoice in the escape of humanity, I cannot return to the world. The world soon forgets, and in reaction from its panic it will claim revenge. I should soon be ridiculed and perhaps even be accused of having caused the panic by my false predictions. No, my friends, I cannot return. I intend to stay where I am. You were right in placing me here, and I shall remain.

And the professor kept his word.

THE END.

THE FATE OF THE POSEIDONIA

By CLARE WINGER HARRIS

(Concluded)

superb figure stood and gazed into the deep velvety blue of the sky, the others following the direction of their leader's gaze.

Involuntarily I too watched the welkin where now not even a moon was visible. Then within the range of my vision there moved a great object—the huge aerial gyroscope,—and beneath it, dwarfed by its far greater bulk, hung a modern ocean-liner, like a jewel from the neck of some gigantic ogre.

Great God—it was the *Poseidonia!* I knew now, in spite of the earthly appearance of the great ship, that it was no terrestrial scene upon which I gazed. I was beholding the victory of Martell, the Martian, who had filled his world's canals with water of Earth, and even borne away trophies of our civilization to exhibit to his fellow-beings.

I closed my eyes to shut out the awful scene, and thought of Margaret, dead and yet aboard the liner, frozen in the absolute cold of outer space!

How long I sat stunned and horrified I do not know, but when I looked back for another last glimpse of the Martian landscape, I uttered a gasp of incredulity. A face filled the entire vaporous screen, the beloved features of Margaret Landon. She was speaking and her voice came over the distance like the memory of a sound that is not quite audible and yet very real to the person in whose mind it exists. It was more as if time divided us instead of space, yet I knew it was the latter, for while a few minutes of time came between us, millions of miles of space intervened!

"George," came the sweet, far-away voice, "I loved you, but you were so suspicious and jealous that I accepted the companionship of Martell, hoping to bring you to your senses. I did not know what an agency for evil he had established upon the earth. Forgive me, dear."

She smiled wistfully. "My parents perished with hundreds of others in the transportation of the *Poseidonia,* but Martell took me from the ship to the ether-craft for the journey, so that I alone was saved."

Her eyes filled with tears. "Do not mourn for me, George, for I shall take up the thread of life anew among these strange but beautiful surroundings. Mars is indeed lovely, but I will tell you of it later for I cannot talk long now."

"I only want to say," she added hastily, "that Terra need fear Mars no more. There is a sufficiency of water now—and I will prevent any—"

She was gone, and in her stead was the leering, malevolent face of Martell. He was minus his skullcap, and his clipped feathers stood up like the ruff of an angry turkey-gobbler.

I reached instinctively for the dial, but before my hand touched it there came a sound, not unlike that of escaping steam, and instantaneously the picture vanished. I did not object to the disappearance of the Martian, but another fact did cause me regret; from that moment, I was never able to view the ruddy planet through the agency of the little machine. All communication had been forever shut off by Martell.

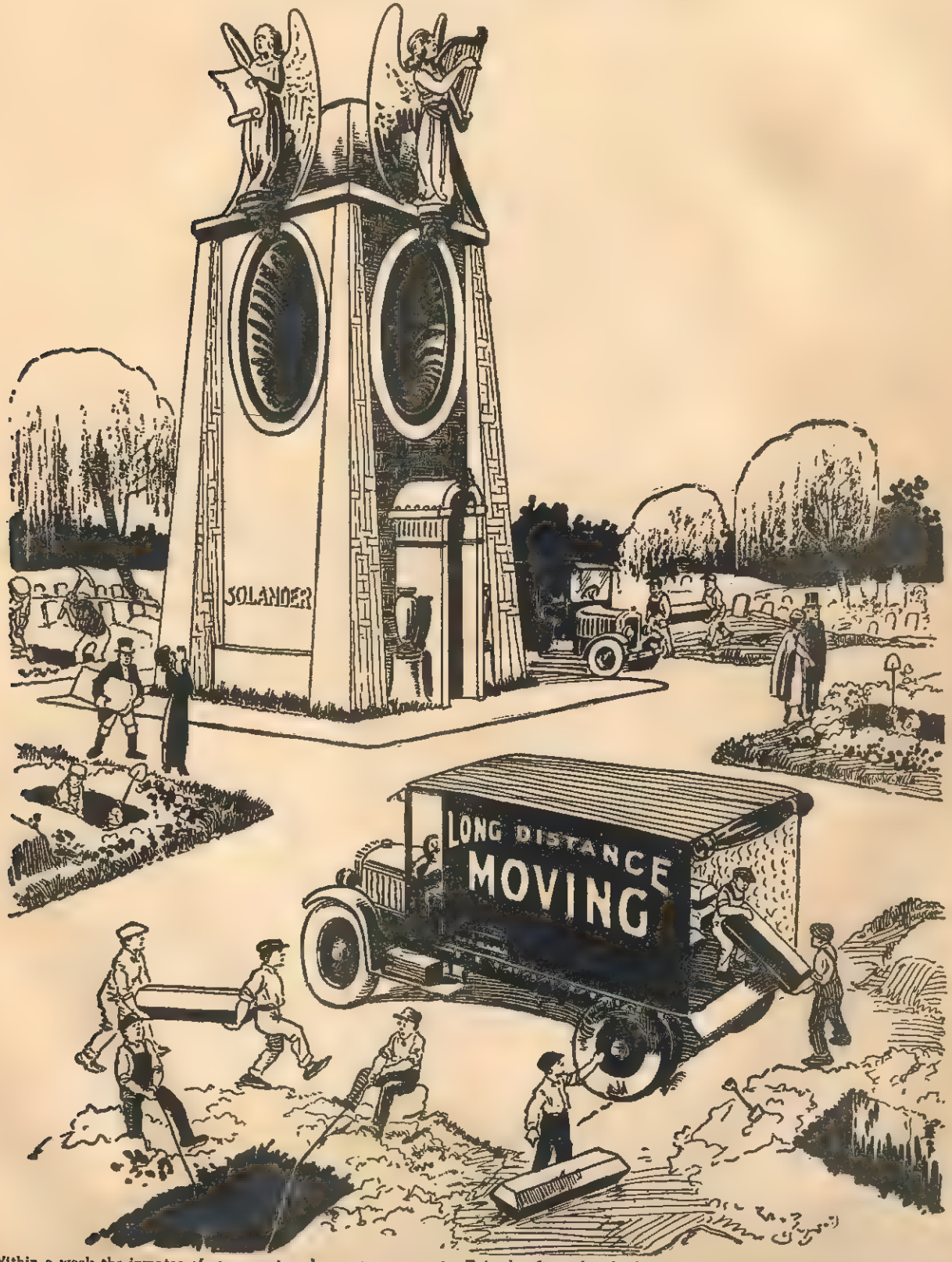
Although many doubt the truth of my solution to the mystery of the disappearance of the *Pegasus* and of the *Poseidonia,* and are still searching beneath the ocean waves, I know that never will either of them be seen again on Earth.

THE END.

SOLANDER'S RADIO TOMB

By Ellis Parker Butler

Author of "Pigs Is Pigs" and "An Experiment in Gyro-hats"



Within a week the inmates of our cemetery began to move out. Friends of people who had been buried there over a hundred years, came and moved them to other cemeteries. In a month our cemetery looked like one of those war battle-fields . . . . not a man, woman or child was left in the place, except Remington Solander in his granite tomb.

I FIRST met Mr. Remington Solander shortly after I installed my first radio set. I was going in to New York on the 8:15 A.M. train and was sitting with my friend Murchison and, as a matter of course, we were talking radio. I had just told Murchison that he was a lunkheaded noodle and that for two cents I would poke him in the jaw, and that even a pin-headed idiot ought to know that a tube set was better than a crystal set. To this Murchison had replied that that settled it. He said he had always known I was a moron, and now he was sure of it.

"If you had enough brains to fill a hazelnut shell," he said, "you wouldn't talk that way. Anybody but a half-baked lunatic would know that what a man wants in radio is clear, sharp reception and that's what a crystal gives you. You're one of these half-wits that think they're classy if they can hear some two-cent station five hundred miles away utter a few faint squeaks. Shut up! I don't want to talk to you. I don't want to listen to you. Go and sit somewhere else."

Of course, this was what was to be expected of Murchison. And if I did let out a few laps of anger, I feel I was entirely justified. Radio fans are always disputing over the relative merits of crystal and tube sets, but I knew I was right. I was just trying to decide whether to choke Murchison with my bare hand and throw his lifeless body out of the car window, or tell him a few things I had been wanting to say ever since he began knocking my tube set, when this Remington Solander, who was sitting behind us, leaned forward and tapped me on the shoulder. I turned quickly and saw his long sheeplike face close to mine. He was chewing cardamon seed and breathing the odor into my face.

"My friend," he said, "come back and sit with me; I want to ask you a few questions about radio."

Well, I couldn't resist that, could I? No radio fan could. I did not care much for the looks of this Remington Solander man, but for the last few weeks my friends had seemed to be steering away from me when I drew near, although I am sure I never said anything to bore them. All I ever talked about was my radio set and some new hook-ups I was trying, but I had noticed that men who formerly had seemed to be fond of my company now gave startled looks when I neared them. Some even climbed over the nearest fence and ran madly across vacant lots, looking over their shoulders with frightened glances as they ran. For a week I had not been able to get any man of my acquaintance to listen to one word from me, except Murchison, and he is an utter idiot, as I think I have made clear. So I left Murchison and sat with Remington Solander.

"PIGS is Pigs" Butler quite surpasses himself in this story. The intricacies of radio are so great, and the changes occur so quickly, that no one can afford to make a will wherein a radio provision figures. Once we thought of having a radio loud speaker installed in our coffin, to keep us company and to make it less lonesome. After reading this story we quickly changed our mind. It is one of the funniest, most mirth-provoking bits of humor we have come across in a long while.

A Radio Set Proposed for the Cemetery

IN one way I was proud to be invited to sit with Remington Solander, because he was far and away the richest man in our town. When he died, his estate proved to amount to three million dollars. I had seen him often, and I knew who he was, but he was a stand-offish old fellow and did not mix, so I had never met him. He was a tall man and thin, somewhat flabby and he was pale in an unhealthy sort of way. But, after all, he was a millionaire and a member of one of the "old families" of Westcote, so I took the seat alongside of him with considerable satisfaction.

"I gather," he said as soon as I was seated, "that you are interested in radio."

I told him I was.

"And I'm just building a new set, using a new hook-up that I heard of about a week ago," I said. "I think it is going to be a wonder. Now, here is the idea: instead of using a grid——"

"Yes, yes!" the old aristocrat said hastily. "But never mind that now. I know very little of such things. I have an electrician employed by the year to care for my radio set and I leave all such things to him. You are a lawyer, are you not?"

I told him I was.

"And you are chairman of the trustees of the Westcote Cemetery, are you not?" he asked.

I told him I was that also. And I may say that the Westcote Cemetery Association is one of the rightest and tightest little corporations in existence. It has been in existence since 1808 and has been exceedingly profitable to those fortunate enough to hold its stock. I inherited the small block I own from my grandfather. Recently we trustees had bought sixty additional acres adjoining the old cemetery and had added them to it, and we were about ready to put the new lots on the market. At $300 apiece there promised to be a tremendous profit in the thing, for our cemetery was a fashionable place to be buried in and the demand for the lots in the new addition promised to be enormous.

Solander's Will and Testament

"YOU have not known it," said Remington Solander in his slow drawl, which had the effect of letting his words slide out of his mouth and drip down his long chin like cold molasses, "but I have been making inquiries about you, and I have been meaning to speak to you. I am drawing up a new last will and testament, and I want you to draw up one of the clauses for me."

"Why, certainly, Mr. Solander," I said with increased pride. "I'll be glad to be of service to you."

"I am choosing you for the work," Remington Solander said, "because you know and love radio as I do, and because you are a trustee of the cemetery association. Are you a religious man?"

"Well," I said, a little uneasily, "some. Some, but not much."

"No matter," said Mr. Solander, placing a hand on my arm. "I am. I have always been. From my earliest youth my mind has been on serious things. As a matter of fact, sir, I have compiled a

manuscript collection of religious quotations, hymns, sermons and uplifting thoughts which now fill fourteen volumes, all in my own handwriting. Fortunately, I inherited money, and this collection is my gift to the world."

"And a noble one, I'm sure," I said.

"Most noble," said Mr. Solander. "But, sir, I have not confined my activities to the study chair. I have kept my eye on the progress of the world. And it seems to me that radio, this new and wonderful invention, is the greatest discovery of all ages and imperishable. But, sir, it is being twisted to cheap uses. Jazz! Cheap songs! Worldly words and music! That I mean to remedy."

"Well," I said, "it might be done. Of course, people like what they like."

"Some nobler souls like better things," said Remington Solander solemnly. "Some more worthy men and women will welcome nobler radio broadcasting. In my will I am putting aside one million dollars to establish and maintain a broadcasting station that will broadcast only my fourteen volumes of hymns and uplifting material. Every day this matter will go forth—sermons, lectures on prohibition, noble thoughts and religious poems."

Arranging the Contract

I ASSURED him that some people might be glad to get that—that a lot of people might, in fact, and that I could write that into his will without any trouble.

"Ah!" said Remington Solander. "But that is already in my will. What I want you to write for my will, is another clause. I mean to build, in your cemetery, a high-class and imperishable granite tomb for myself. I mean to place it on that knoll—that high knoll—the highest spot in your cemetery. What I want you to write into my will is a clause providing for the perpetual care and maintenance of my tomb. I want to set aside five hundred thousand dollars for that purpose."

"Well," I said to the sheep-faced millionaire, "I can do that, too."

"Yes," he agreed. "And I want to give to my family and relations the remaining million and a half dollars, provided," he said, accenting the "provided," "they carry out faithfully the provisions of the clause providing for the perpetual care and maintenance of my tomb. If they don't care and maintain," he said, giving me a hard look, "that million and a half is to go to the Home for Flea-Bitten Dogs."

"They'll care and maintain, all right!" I laughed.

"I think so," said Remington Solander gravely. "I do think so, indeed! And now, sir, we come to the important part. You, as I know, are a trustee of the cemetery."

"Yes," I said, "I am."

"For drawing this clause of my will, if you can draw it," said Remington Solander, looking me full in the eye with both his own, which were like the eyes of a salt mackerel, "I shall pay you five thousand dollars."

Well, I almost gasped. It was a big lot of money for drawing one clause of a will, and I began to smell a rat right there. But, I may say, the proposition Remington Solander made to me was one I was able, after quite a little talk with my fellow trustees of the cemetery, to carry out. What Remington Solander wanted was to be permitted to put a radio loud-speaking outfit in his granite tomb—a radio loud-speaking outfit permanently set at 327 meters wave-length, which was to be the wave-length of his endowed broadcasting station. I don't know how Remington Solander first got this remarkable idea, but about that time an undertaker in New York had rigged up a hearse with a phonograph so that the hearse would loud-speak suitable hymns on the way to the cemetery, and that may have suggested the loud-speaking tomb to Remington Solander, but it is not important where he got the idea. He had it, and he was set on having it carried out.

The Dissemination of Religion from the Cemetery

"THINK," he said, "of the uplifting effect of it! On the highest spot in the cemetery will stand my noble tomb, loud-speaking in all directions the solemn and holy words and music I have collected in my fourteen volumes. All who enter the cemetery will hear; all will be ennobled and uplifted."

That was so, too. I saw that at once. I said so. So Remington Solander went on to explain that the income from the five hundred thousand dollars would be set aside to keep "A" batteries and "B" batteries supplied, to keep the outfit in repair, and so on. So I tackled the job rather enthusiastically. I don't say that the five thousand dollar fee did not interest me, but I did think Remington Solander had a grand idea. It would make our cemetery stand out. People would come from everywhere to see and listen. The lots in the new addition would sell like hot cakes.

But I did have a little trouble with the other trustees. They balked when I explained that Remington Solander wanted the sole radio loud-speaking rights of our cemetery, but some one finally suggested that if Remington Solander put up a new and artistic iron fence around the whole cemetery it might be all right. They made him submit his fourteen volumes so they could see what sort of matter he meant to broadcast from his high-class station, and they agreed it was solemn enough; it was all solemn and sad and gloomy, just the stuff for a cemetery. So when Remington Solander agreed to build the new iron fence they made a formal contract with him, and I drew up the clause for the will, and he bought six lots on top of the high knoll and began erecting his marble mausoleum.

The Building of the Monument and the Death of the Tenant

FOR eight months or so Remington Solander was busier than he had ever been in his life. He superintended the building of the tomb and he had on hand the job of getting his endowed radio station going—it was given the letters WZZZ—and hiring artists to sing and play and speechify his fourteen volumes of gloom and uplift at 327 meters, and it was too much for the old codger. The very night the test of the WZZZ outfit was made he passed away and was no more on earth.

His funeral was one of the biggest we ever had in Westcote. I should judge that five thousand peo-

ple attended his remains to the cemetery, for it had become widely known that the first WZZZ program would be received and loud-spoken from Remington Solander's tomb that afternoon, the first selection on the program—his favorite hymn—beginning as the funeral cortège left the church and the program continuing until dark.

I'll say it was one of the most affecting occasions I have ever witnessed. As the body was being carried into the tomb the loud speaker gave us a sermon by Rev. Peter L. Ruggus, full of sob stuff, and every one of the five thousand present wept. And when the funeral was really finished, over two thousand remained to hear the rest of the program, which consisted of hymns, missionary reports, static and recitations of religious poems. We increased the price of the lots in the new addition one hundred dollars per lot immediately, and we sold four lots that afternoon and two the next morning. The big metropolitan newspapers all gave the Westcote Cemetery full page illustrated articles the next Sunday, and we received during the next week over three hundred letters, mostly from ministers, praising what we had done.

Increased Sales on Lots

BUT that was not the best of it. Requests for lots began to come in by mail. Not only people in Westcote wrote for prices, but people away over in New Jersey and up in Westchester Country, and even from as far away as Poughkeepsie and Delaware. We had twice as many requests for lots as there were lots to sell, and we decided we would have an auction and let them go to the highest bidders. You see Remington Solander's Talking Tomb was becoming nationally famous. We began to negotiate with the owners of six farms adjacent to our cemetery; we figured on buying them and making more new additions to the cemetery. And then we found we could not use three of the farms.

The reason was that the loud speaker in Remington Solander's tomb would not carry that far; it was not strong enough. So we went to the executors of his estate and ran up against another snag—nothing in the radio outfit in the tomb could be altered in any way whatever. That was in the will. The same loud speaker had to be maintained, the same wave-length had to be kept, the same makes of batteries had to be used, the same style of tubes had to be used. Remington Solander had thought of all that. So we decided to let well enough alone—it was all we could do anyway. We bought the farms that were reached by the loud speaker and had them surveyed and laid out in lots—and then the thing happened!

The Cemtery Ruined by Jazz

YES, sir, I'll sell my cemetery stock for two cents on the dollar, if anybody will bid that much for it. For what do you think happened? Along came the Government of the United States, regulating this radio thing, and assigned new wave-lengths to all the broadcasting stations. It gave Remington Solander's endowed broadcasting station WZZZ an 855-meter wave-length, and it gave that station at Dodwood—station PKX—the 327-meter wave-length, and the next day poor old Remington Solander's tomb poured forth "Yes, We Ain't Got No Bananas" and the "Hot Dog" jazz and "If You Don't See Mama Every Night, You Can't See Mama At All," and Hink Tubbs in his funny stories, like "Well, one day an Irishman and a Swede were walking down Broadway and they see a flapper coming towards them. And she had on one of them short skirts they was wearing, see? So Mike he says 'Gee be jabbers, Ole, I see a peach.' So the Swede he says lookin' at the silk stockings, 'Mebby you ban see a peach, Mike, but I ban see one mighty nice pair.' Well, the other day I went to see my mother-in-law—"

You know the sort of program. I don't say that the people who like them are not entitled to them, but I do say they are not the sort of programs to loud-speak from a tomb in a cemetery. I expect old Remington Solander turned clear over in his tomb when those programs began to come through. I know our board of trustees went right up in the air, but there was not a thing we could do about it. The newspapers gave us double pages the next Sunday—"Remington Solander's Jazz Tomb" and "Westcote's Two-Step Cemetery." And within a week the inmates of our cemetery began to move out. Friends of people who had been buried over a hundred years came and moved them to other cemeteries and took the headstones and monuments with them, and in a month our cemetery looked like one of those Great War battlefields—like a lot of shell-holes. Not a man, woman or child was left in the place—except Remington Solander in his granite tomb on top of the high knoll. What we've got on our hands is a deserted cemetery.

They all blame me, but I can't do anything about it. All I can do is groan—every morning I grab the paper and look for the PKX program and then I groan. Remington Solander is the lucky man—he's dead.

THE END.

BEGINNING in the AUGUST ISSUE

"The War of the Worlds"

By H. G. WELLS

The MOON POOL

By A. Merritt

Author of "The People of the Pit."

Swifter than Yolara, she raised the arm that held the vine—and now I knew this was no inert blossoming thing. It was alive! It writhed down her arm, and its five rubescent flower heads thrust out toward the priestess, vibrating, quivering, held in leash only by the light touch of the handmaiden at its very end.

What Went Before

WHILE sitting aboard the SOUTHERN QUEEN, fighting the sinister spell of Papua, Dr. Walter T. Goodwin recognizes in the tall man coming up the plank, one of his oldest friends, singularly changed. Only one month earlier, Dr. David Throckmartin had set forth for Nan-Matal, an extraordinary group of island ruins along the eastern shore of Ponape in the Carolines, together with his wife, Edith, Dr. Charles Stanton, his young associate, and Thora Halverson, a Swedish woman, Edith's nurse.

In Throckmartin's cabin that evening, Dr. Goodwin, the narrator of the story, learns the reason for the strange change; he learns about another world, alien, unfamiliar, a world of terror, whose unknown joy is its greatest terror—of the Dweller, who lures his victims in the path of the moon streams; of the fate of Edith and Stanton and Thora. And later, as though in answer to an irresistible call, Throckmartin disappears out of his cabin, into the night.

Dr. Goodwin goes to Melbourne in the hopes of getting a rescue party, though he realizes that very few indeed would believe his friend's story of the moon path. En route for Ponape and the Nan-Matal, on the SUWARNA, they sight the BRUNHILDA, on which they see its captain, Olaf Huldricksson, lashed to the wheel, in a pitiable state. They learn that he had tied himself to the wheel in order to escape the will of the Dweller. They learn, when Olaf becomes sufficiently calm and trustful, that the Dweller had claimed his wife and child, when the moon was high, and that now he is in search of "The Sparkling Devil." Goodwin tells him he also has the same purpose in mind for he wants to find his friends.

Larry O'Keefe, American and Irish, has implicit faith in the "banshee," an Irish legendary woman spirit, warning of approaching death by her cries, but is curiously free from most other superstitions. Although he wonders at the seeming gullibility of Dr. Goodwin, he decides to pool his lot with that of Goodwin and Olaf and joins in the search.

After many adventures, they reach Ponape, where, with the aid of the maps which Throckmartin had left them, they find the Nan-Matal and the entrance to the Moon Pool. In the full moon, they wait, with automatics ready, for the rock to open and the Dweller to come forth. The miraculous happens—the rock opens. Then a shot is heard, and they discover a German scientist, von Hetzdorp, who is there to find the secret of life for Germany. He realizes that they all could do more than he alone, so he tells them what he has learned of the place and they tell what they know of it.

Von Hetzdorp tells them that the rock remains open for at least three hours and they go within to investigate. They see Huldricksson partly submerged in the Moon Pool, wherein his child had just dropped from his hands. They pull him out and the German treats him with some specially prepared liquid, which neutralizes the burns of radium and X-rays, given by the radioactive liquid in the Moon Pool.

They explore along the terrace and come to another wall on which is a vine with five flowers more heavily designed than the others. As they look on, they notice a great oval begin to glow, wax almost to a flame and shine out as though a light were streaming through the stone itself. Gradually the shadows thicken and suddenly two figures stand before them—one a golden-eyed girl and the other a grotesque frog woman. Thus came Lakla, handmaiden of the Silent One, to show them the way to the interior.

As she directed, Larry presses his fingers on the circles on the wall and suddenly the wind seems to roar above them, the rosy wall disappears and they drop in a car at a tremendous speed to earth-heart. When they get off the car, they see a sparkling nebulosity rising into infinite distances. Miles away, gigantic luminous cliffs spring sheer from the limits of a lake whose waters are of milky opalescence. With Larry in the lead, they march further toward another entrance. Soon they are met by a group of powerful green dwarfs. After some conversation, Rador, the leader of the dwarfs, brings them to the Princess Yolara, priestess of the Shining One and Lugur, its Voice. When Yolara and Lugur learn that it was the vine and flowers design that enabled these people of the outer world to enter, their previous hostility is no longer obvious, though they still feel resentment. The searchers learn that the vine with five flowers is the sign of The Silent One.

THE MOON POOL

By A. MERRITT

Part II

CHAPTER XIV (Continued)

The Justice of Lora

AND again the globe ran swiftly with its film of colors, darkened, and shone rosy once more. From without there came the rustle of many feet upon the rugs. Yolara pressed a slender hand upon the base of the pedestal of the globe beside her. Abruptly the light faded from all, and on the same instant the four walls of blackness vanished, revealing on two sides the lovely, unfamiliar garden through the guarding rows of pillars; at our backs soft draperies hid what lay beyond; before us, flanked by flowered screens, was the corridor through which we had entered, crowded now by the green dwarfs of the great hall.

The dwarfs advanced. Each, I now noted, had the same clustering black hair of Rador. They separated, and from them stepped three figures—a youth of not more than twenty, short, but with the great shoulders of all the males we had seen of this race; a girl of seventeen, I judged, white-faced, a head taller than the boy, her long, black hair dishevelled; and behind these two a stunted, gnarled shape whose head was sunk deep between the enormous shoulders, whose white beard fell like that of some ancient gnome down to his waist, and whose eyes were a white flame of hate. The girl cast herself weeping at the feet of the priestess; the youth stood there and regarded her curiously.

"You are Songar of the Lower Waters?" murmured Yolara almost caressingly. "And this is your daughter and her lover?"

The gnome nodded, the flame in his eyes leaping higher.

"It has come to me that you three have dared blaspheme the Shining One, its priestess, and its Voice," went on Yolara smoothly. "Also that you have called out to the three Silent Ones. Is it true?"

"Your spies have spoken—and have you not already judged us?" The voice of the old dwarf was bitter.

A flicker shot through the eyes of Yolara, again cold grey. The girl reached a trembling hand out to the hem of the priestess' veils.

"Tell us why you did these things, Songar," she said. "Why you did them, knowing full well what your — reward — would be."

The dwarf stiffened; he raised his withered arms, and his eyes blazed.

"Because evil are your thoughts and evil are your deeds," he cried. "Yours and your lover's, there"— he levelled a finger at Lugur. "Because of the Shining One you have made evil, too, and the greater wickedness you contemplate—you and he with the Shining One. But I tell you that your measure of iniquity is full; the tale of your sin near ended! Yea—the Silent Ones have been pa-

BY this time, after you have read the first installment of "The Moon Pool," you must have become convinced that here is the scientifiction story. In this, the second installment, The Shining One is much in evidence and, if anything, the mystery begins to deepen, as with bated breath you read on of the astounding exploits of the adventurers. But there is no use pointing out any one part of the story, because there is hardly a paragraph that does not command your full and undivided interest. And still the mystery grows, and still the astounding things which are holding your attention keep on coming fast and thick, and you begin to wonder at the well-nigh inexhaustible fund of imagination which our author possesses.

tient, but soon they will speak." He pointed at us. "A sign are *they*—a warning—harlot!" He spat the word.

In Yolara's eyes, grown black, the devils leaped unrestrained.

"Is it even so, Songar?" her voice caressed. "Now ask the Silent Ones to help you! They sit afar—but surely they will hear you." The sweet voice was mocking. "As for these two, they shall pray to the Shining One for forgiveness—and surely the Shining One will take them to its bosom! As for you—you have lived long enough, Songar! Pray to the Silent Ones, Songar, and pass out into the nothingness—you!"

She dipped down into her bosom and drew forth something that resembled a small cone of tarnished silver. She levelled it, a covering clicked from its base, and out of it darted a slender ray of intense green light.

It struck the old dwarf squarely over the heart, and spread swift as light itself, covering him with a gleaming, pale film. She clenched her hand upon the cone, and the ray disappeared. She thrust the cone back into her breast and leaned forward expectantly; so Lugur and so the other dwarfs. From the girl came a low wail of anguish; the boy dropped upon his knees, covering his face.

For the moment the white beard stood rigid; then the robe that had covered him seemed to melt away, revealing all the knotted, monstrous body. And in that body a vibration began, increasing to incredible rapidity. It wavered before us like a reflection in a still pond stirred by a sudden wind. It grew and grew—to a rhythm whose rapidity was intolerable to watch and that still chained the eyes.

The figure grew indistinct, misty. Tiny sparks in infinite numbers leaped from it—like, I thought, the radiant shower of particles hurled out by radium when seen in the spinthariscope. Mistier still it grew—there trembled before us for a moment a faintly luminous shadow which held, here and there, tiny sparkling atoms like those that pulsed in the light about us! The glowing shadow vanished, the sparkling atoms were still for a moment—and shot away, joining those dancing others.

Where the gnomelike form had been but a few seconds before—there was nothing!

O'Keefe drew a long breath, and I was sensible of a prickling along my scalp.

Yolara leaned toward us.

"You have seen," she said. Her eyes lingered tigerishly upon Olaf's pallid face. "Heed!" she whispered. She turned to the men in green, who were laughing softly among themselves.

"Take these two, and go!" she commanded.

"The justice of Lora," said the red dwarf. "The justice of Lora and the Shining One under Thanaroa!"

Upon the utterance of the last word I saw von Hetzdorp start violently. The hand at his side made a swift, surreptitious gesture, so fleeting that I hardly caught it. The red dwarf stared at the German, and there was amazement upon his face.

Swiftly as von Hetzdorp, he returned it.

"Yolara," the red dwarf spoke, "it would please me to take this man of wisdom to my own place for a time. I would have the giant come, too."

The woman awoke from her brooding; nodded.

"As you will, Lugur," she said.

And as, shaken to the core, we passed out into the garden into the full throbbing of the light, I wondered if all the tiny sparkling diamond points that shook about us had once been men like Songar of the Lower Waters—and felt my very soul grow sick!

CHAPTER XV

The Angry, Whispering Globe

OUR way led along a winding path between banked masses of softly radiant blooms, groups of feathery ferns whose plumes were starred with fragrant white and blue flowerets, slender creepers swinging from the branches of the strangely trunked trees, bearing along their threads orchid-like blossoms both delicately frail and gorgeously flamboyant.

The path we trod was an exquisite mosaic—pastel greens and pinks upon a soft grey base, garlands of nimbused forms like the flaming rose of the Rosicrucians held in the mouths of the flying serpents. A smaller pavilion arose before us, single-storied, front wide open.

Upon its threshold Rador paused, bowed deeply, and motioned us within. The chamber we entered was large, closed on two sides by screens of grey; at the back gay, concealing curtains. The low table of blue stone, dressed with fine white cloths, stretched at one side flanked by the cushioned divans.

At the left was a high tripod bearing one of the rosy globes we had seen in the house of Yolara; at the head of the table a smaller globe similar to the whispering one. Rador pressed upon its base, and two other screens slid into place across the entrance, shutting in the room.

He clapped his hands; the curtains parted, and two girls came through them. Tall and willow lithe, their bluish-black hair falling in ringlets just below their white shoulders, their clear eyes of forget-me-not blue, and skins of extraordinary fineness and purity—they were singularly attractive. Each was clad in an extremely scanty bodice of silken blue, girdled above a kirtle that came barely to their very pretty knees.

"Food and drink," ordered Rador.

They dropped back through the curtains.

"Do you like them?" he asked us.

"Some chickens!" said Larry. "They delight the heart," he translated for Rador.

The green dwarf's next remark made me gasp.

"They are yours," he said.

Before I could question him further upon this extraordinary statement the pair reentered, bearing a great platter on which were small loaves, strange fruits, and three immense flagons of rock crystal—two filled with a slightly sparkling yellow liquid and the third with a purplish drink. I became acutely sensible that it had been hours since I had either eaten or drunk. The yellow flagons were set before Larry and me, the purple at Rador's hand.

The girls, at his signal, again withdrew. I raised my glass to my lips and took a deep draft. The taste was unfamiliar but delightful.

Almost at once my fatigue disappeared. I realized a clarity of mind, an interesting exhilaration and sense of irresponsibility, of freedom from care, that were oddly enjoyable. Larry became immediately his old gay self.

The green dwarf regarded us whimsically, sipping from his great flagon of rock crystal.

"Much do I desire to know of that world you came from," he said at last—"through the rocks," he added, slyly.

"And much do we desire to know of this world of yours, O Rador," I answered.

Should I ask him of the Dweller; seek from him a clue to Throckmartin? Again, clearly as a spoken command, came the warning to forbear, to wait. And once more I obeyed.

"Let us learn, then, from each other." The dwarf was laughing. "And first—are all above like you—drawn out"—he made an expressive gesture—"and are there many of you?"

"There are—" I hesitated, and at last spoke the Polynesian that means tens upon tens multiplied indefinitely—"there are as many as the drops of water in the lake we saw from the ledge where you found us," I continued; "many as the leaves on the trees without. And they are all like us—varyingly."

He considered skeptically, I could see, my remark upon our numbers.

"In Muria," he said at last, "the men are like me or like Lugur. Our women are as you see them—like Yolara or those two who served you." He hesitated. "And there is a third; but only one."

Larry leaned forward eagerly.

"Brown-haired with glints of ruddy bronze, golden-eyed, and lovely as a dream, with long, slender, beautiful hands?" he cried.

"Where saw you *her?*" interrupted the dwarf, starting to his feet.

"Saw her?" Larry recovered himself. "Nay, Rador, perhaps I only dreamed that there was such a woman."

"See to it, then, that you tell not your dream to Yolara," said the dwarf grimly. "For her I meant and her you have pictured is Lakla, the handmaiden to the Silent Ones, and neither Yolara nor Lugur, nay, nor the Shining One, love her overmuch, stranger."

"Does she dwell here?" Larry's face was alight.

The dwarf hesitated, glanced about him anxiously.

"Nay," he answered, "ask me no more of her." He was silent for a space. "And what do you who are as leaves or drops of water do in that world of yours?" he said, plainly bent on turning the subject.

"Keep off the golden-eyed girl, Larry," I interjected. "Wait till we find out why she's *tabu.*"

"Love and battle, strive and accomplish and die; or fail and die," answered Larry—to Rador—giving me a quick nod of acquiescence to my warning in English.

"In that at least your world and mine differ little," said the dwarf.

"How great is this world of yours, Rador?" I spoke.

He considered me gravely.

"HOW great indeed I do not know," he said frankly at last. "The land where we dwell with the Shining One stretches along the white waters for—" He used a phrase of which I could make nothing. "Beyond this city of the Shining One and on the hither shores of the white waters dwell the *mayia ladala*—the common ones." He took a deep draft from his flagon. "There are, first, the fair-haired ones, the children of the ancient rulers," he continued. "There are, second, we the soldiers; and last, the *mayia ladala,* who dig and till and weave and toil and give our rulers and us their daughters, and dance with the Shining One!" he added.

"Who rules?" I asked.

"The fair-haired, under the Council of Nine, who are under Yolara, the Priestess and Lugur, the Voice," he answered, "who are in turn beneath the Shining One!" There was a ring of bitter satire in the last.

"And those three who were judged?"—this from Larry.

"They were of the *mayia ladala,*" he replied, "like those two I gave you. But they grow restless. They do not like to dance with the Shining One—the blasphemers!" He raised his voice in a sudden great shout of mocking laughter.

In his words I caught a fleeting picture of the race—an ancient, luxurious, close-bred oligarchy clustered about some mysterious deity; a soldier class that supported them; and underneath all the toiling, oppressed hordes.

"And is that all?" asked Larry.

"No," he answered. "There is the Sea of Crimson where——"

Without warning the globe beside us sent out a vicious note, Rador turned toward it, his face paling. Its surface crawled with whisperings—angry, peremptory!

"I hear!" he croaked, gripping the table. "I obey!"

He turned to us a face devoid for once of its malice.

"Ask me no more questions, strangers," he said. "And now, if you are done, I will show you where you may sleep and bathe."

He arose abruptly. We followed him through the hangings, passed through a corridor and into another smaller chamber, roofless, the sides walled with screens of dark grey. Two cushioned couches were there and a curtained door leading into an open, outer enclosure in which a fountain played within a wide pool.

"Your bath," said Rador. He dropped the curtain and came back into the room. He touched a carved flower at one side. There was a tiny sighing from overhead and instantly across the top spread a veil of blackness, impenetrable to light but certainly not to air, for through it pulsed little breaths of the garden fragrances. The room filled

with a cool twilight, refreshing, sleep-inducing. The green dwarf pointed to the couches.

"Sleep!" he said. "Sleep and fear nothing. My men are on guard outside." He came closer to us, the old mocking gaiety sparkling in his eyes.

"But I spoke too quickly," he whispered. "Whether it is because the *Afyo Maie* fears their tongues—or—" he laughed at Larry. "The maids are *not* yours!" Still laughing he vanished through the curtains of the room of the fountain before I could ask him the meaning of his curious gift, its withdrawal, and his most enigmatic closing remarks.

"Back in the great old days of Ireland," thus Larry breaking into my thoughts raptly, the brogue thick, "there was Cairill mac Cairill—Cairill Swiftspear. An' Cairill wronged Keevan of Emhain Abhlach, of the blood of Angus of the great people when he was sleeping in the likeness of a pale reed. Then Keevan put this penance on Cairill—that for a year Cairill should wear his body in Emhain Abhlach which is the Land of Faery and for that year Keevan should wear the body of Cairill. And it was done.

"In that year Cairill met Emar of the Birds that are one white, one red, and one black—and they loved, and from that love sprang Ailill their son. And when Ailill was born he took a reed flute and first he played slumber on Cairill, and then he played old age so that Cairill grew white and withered; then Ailill played again and Cairill became a shadow—then a shadow of a shadow—then a breath; and the breath went out upon the wind!" He shivered. "Like the old gnome," he whispered, "that they called Songar of the Lower Waters!"

He shook his head as though he cast a dream from him. Then, all alert——

"But that was in Ireland ages agone. And there's nothing like that here, Doc!" He laughed. "It doesn't scare me one little bit, old boy. The pretty devil lady's got the wrong slant. When you've had a pal standing beside you one moment—full of life, and joy, and power, and potentialities, telling what he's going to do to make the world hum when he gets through killing Germans, just running over with zip and pep of life, Doc—and the next instant, right in the middle of a laugh—a piece of enemy shell takes off half his head and with it joy and power and all the rest of it"—his face twitched—"well, old man, in the face of *that* mystery a disappearing act such as the devil lady treated us to doesn't make much of a dent. Not on me. But by the brogans of Brian Boru—if we could have had some of that stuff to turn on the Kaiser—oh, boy!"

HE was silent, evidently contemplating the idea with vast pleasure. And as for me, at that moment my last doubt of Larry O'Keefe vanished, I saw that he did believe, really believed, in his banshees, his leprechauns and all the old dreams of the Gael—but only within the limits of Ireland.

In one drawer of his mind was packed all his superstition, his mysticism, and what of weakness it might carry. But face him with any peril or problem and the drawer closed instantaneously, leaving a mind that was utterly fearless, incredulous, and ingenious; swept clean of all cobwebs by as fine a skeptic broom as ever brushed a brain.

"Some stuff!" Deepest admiration was in his voice. "If we'd only had it when the war was on—imagine half a dozen of us scooting over the enemy batteries and the Jerries underneath all at once beginning to shake themselves to pieces! Wow!" His tone was rapturous.

"It's easy enough to explain, Larry," I said. "The effect, that is—for what the green ray is made of I don't know, of course. But what it does, clearly, is stimulate atomic vibration to such a pitch that the cohesion between the particles of matter is broken and the body flies to bits—just as a flywheel does when its speed gets so great that the particles of which *it* is made can't hold together."

"Shake themselves to pieces is right, then!" he exclaimed.

"Absolutely right," I nodded. "Everything in Nature vibrates. And all matter—whether man or beast or stone or metal or vegetable—is made up of vibrating molecules, which are made up of vibrating atoms which are made up of truly infinitely small particles of electricity—protons and electrons, and these the base of all matter, are themselves perhaps only a vibration of the mysterious ether.

"If a magnifying glass of sufficient size and strength could be placed over us we could see ourselves as sieves—our space lattice, as it is called. And all that is necessary to break down the lattice, to shake us into nothingness, is some agent that will set our atoms vibrating at such a rate that at last they escape the unseen cords and fly off.

"The green ray of Yolara is such an agent. It set up in the dwarf that incredibly rapid rhythm that you saw and—shook him not to atoms—but to electrons!"

"They had a gun on the West Front—a seventy-five," said O'Keefe, "that broke the eardrums of everybody who fired it, no matter what protection was used. It looked like all the other seventy-fives—but there was something about its sound that did it. They had to recast it."

"It's practically the same thing," I replied. "By some freak its vibratory qualities had that effect. The deep whistle of the murdered *Lusitania* would, for instance, make the Singer Building shake to its foundations; while the *Olympic* did not affect the Singer at all, but made the Woolworth shiver all through. In each case they stimulated the atomic vibration of the particular building——"

I paused, aware all at once of an intense drowsiness. O'Keefe, yawning, reached down to unfasten his puttees.

"Lord, I'm sleepy!" he exclaimed. "Can't understand it—what you say—most—interesting—Lord!" he yawned again; straightened. "What made Reddy take such a shine to the Von?" he asked.

"Thanaroa," I answered, fighting to keep my eyes open.

"What?"

"When Lugur spoke that name I saw von Hetzdorp signal him. Thanaroa is, I suspect, the original form of the name of Tangaroa, the greatest

god of the Polynesians. There's a secret cult to him in the islands. Von Hetzdorp may belong to it—he knows it anyway. Lugûr recognized the signal and despite his surprise answered it."

"The Von gave him the high sign, eh?" mused Larry. "How could they both know it?"

"The cult is a very ancient one. Undoubtedly it had its origin in the dim beginnings before these people migrated here," I replied. "It's a link—one—of the few links between up there and the lost past——"

"Trouble then," mumbled Larry. "Hell brewing! I smell it— Say, Doc, is this sleepiness natural? Wonder where my—gas mask—is—" he added, half incoherently.

But I myself was struggling desperately against the drugged slumber pressing down upon me.

"Lakla!" I heard O'Keefe murmur. "Lakla of the golden eyes—no Eilidh—the Fair!" He made an immense effort, half raised himself, grinned faintly.

"Thought this was paradise when I first saw it, Doc," he sighed. "But I know now, if it is, No-Man's Land was the greatest place on earth for a honeymoon. They—they've got us, Doc—" He sank back. "Good luck, old boy, wherever you're going." His hand waved feebly. "Glad—knew—you. Hope—see—you—'gain——"

His voice trailed into silence. Fighting, fighting with every fibre of brain and nerve against the sleep, I felt myself being steadily overcome. Yet before oblivion rushed down upon me I seemed to see upon the grey-screened wall nearest the Irishman an oval of rosy light begin to glow; watched, as my falling lids inexorably fell, a flame-tipped shadow waver on it; thicken; condense—and there looking down upon Larry, her eyes great golden stars in which intensest curiosity and shy tenderness struggled, sweet mouth half smiling, was the girl of the Moon Pool's Chamber, the girl whom the green dwarf had named—Lakla; the vision Larry had invoked before that sleep which I could no longer deny had claimed him——

Closer she came—closer—the eyes were over us. Then oblivion indeed!

CHAPTER XVI

Yolara of Muria vs. The O'Keefe

I AWAKENED with all the familiar, homely sensation of a shade having been pulled up in a darkened room. I thrilled with a wonderful sense of deep rest and restored resiliency. The ebon shadow had vanished from above and down into the room was pouring the silvery light. From the fountain pool came a mighty splashing and shouts of laughter. I jumped and drew the curtain. O'Keefe and Rador were swimming a wild race; the dwarf like an otter, outdistancing and playing around the Irishman at will.

Had that overpowering sleep—and now I confess that my struggle against it had been largely inspired by fear that it was the abnormal slumber which Throckmartin had described as having heralded the approach of the Dweller before it had carried away Thora and Stanton—had that sleep been after all nothing but natural reaction of tired nerves and brains?

And that last vision of the golden-eyed girl bending over Larry? Had that also been a delusion of an overstressed mind? Well, it might have been, I could not tell. At any rate, I decided, I would speak about it to O'Keefe once we were alone again—and then giving myself up to the urge of buoyant well-being I shouted like a boy, stripped and joined the two in the pool. The water was warm and I felt the unwonted tingling of life in every vein increase; something from it seemed to pulse through the skin, carrying a clean vigorous vitality that toned every fibre. Tiring at last, we swam to the edge and drew ourselves out. The green dwarf quickly clothed himself and Larry rather carefully donned his uniform.

"The *Afyo Maie* has summoned us, Doc," he said. "We're to—well—I suppose you'd call it breakfast with her. After that, Rador tells me, we're to have a session with the Council of Nine. I suppose Yolara is as curious as any lady of—the upper world, as you might put it—and just naturally can't wait," he added.

He gave himself a last shake, patted the automatic hidden under his left arm, whistled cheerfully.

"After you, my dear Alphonse," he said to Rador, with a low bow. The dwarf laughed, bent in an absurd imitation of Larry's mocking courtesy and started ahead of us to the house of the priestess. When he had gone a little way on the orchid-walled path I whispered to O'Keefe:

"Larry, when you were falling off to sleep—did you think you saw anything?"

"See anything!" he grinned. "Doc, sleep hit me like a bombshell. I thought they were pulling the gas on us. I—I had some intention of bidding you tender farewells," he continued, half sheepishly. "I think I did start 'em, didn't I?"

I nodded.

"But wait a minute—" he hesitated. "I had a queer sort of dream——"

"What was it?" I asked, eagerly.

"Well," he answered, slowly, "I suppose it was because I'd been thinking of—Golden Eyes. Anyway, I thought she came through the wall and leaned over me—yes, and put one of those long white hands of hers on my head—I couldn't raise my lids—but in some queer way I could see her. Then it got real dreamish. Why do you ask!"

Rador turned back toward us.

"Later," I answered. "Not now. When we're alone."

But through me went a little glow of reassurance. Whatever the maze through which we were moving; whatever of menacing evil lurking there—the Golden Girl was clearly watching over us; watching with whatever unknown powers she could muster.

We passed the pillared entrance; went through a long bowered corridor and stopped before a door that seemed to be sliced from a monolith of pale jade—high, narrow, set in a wall of opal.

Rador stamped twice and the same supernally sweet, silver bell tones of—yesterday, I must call it,

although in that place of eternal day the term is meaningless—bade us enter. The door slipped aside. The chamber was small, the opal walls screening it on three sides, the black opacity covering it, the fourth side opening out into a delicious little walled garden—a mass of the fragrant, luminous blooms and delicately colored fruit. Facing it was a small table of reddish wood and from the omnipresent cushions heaped around it arose to greet us—Yolara.

Larry drew in his breath with an involuntary gasp of admiration and bowed low. My own admiration was as frank—and the priestess was well pleased with our homage.

SHE was swathed in the filmy, translucent webs, now of palest blue. The corn-silk hair was caught within a wide-meshed golden net in which sparkled tiny brilliants, like blended sapphires and diamonds. Her own azure eyes sparkled as brightly as they, and I noted again in their clear depths the half-eager approval as they rested upon O'Keefe's lithe, well-knit figure and his keen, clean-cut face. The high-arched, slender feet rested upon soft sandals whose gauzy withes laced the exquisitely formed leg to just below the dimpled knee.

"Some giddy wonder!" exclaimed Larry, looking at me and placing a hand over his heart. "Put her on a New York roof and she'd empty Broadway. Take the cue from me, Doc."

He turned to Yolara, whose face was somewhat puzzled.

"I said, O lady whose shining hair is a web for hearts, that in our world your beauty would dazzle the sight of men as would a little woman sun!" he said, in the florid imagery to which the tongue lends itself so well.

A flush stole up through the translucent skin. The blue eyes softened and she waved us toward the cushions. Black-haired maids stole in, placing before us the fruits, the little loaves and a steaming drink somewhat the color and odor of chocolate. I was conscious of outrageous hunger.

"What are you named, strangers?" she asked.

"This man is named Goodwin," said O'Keefe. "As for me, call me Larry."

"Nothing like getting acquainted quick," he said to me—but kept his eyes upon Yolara as though he were voicing another honeyed phrase. And so she took it, for: "You must teach me your tongue," she murmured.

"Then shall I have two words where now I have one to tell you of your loveliness," he answered.

"And also that'll take time," he spoke to me. "Essential occupation out of which we can't be drafted to make these fun-loving folk any Roman holiday. Get me!"

"*Larree,*" mused Yolara. "I like the sound. It is sweet—" and indeed it was as she spoke it.

"And what is your land named, *Larree?*" she continued. "And Goodwin's?" She caught the sound perfectly.

"My land, O lady of loveliness, is two—Ireland and America; his but one—America."

She repeated the two names—slowly, over and over. We seized the opportunity to attack the food; halting half guiltily as she spoke again.

"Oh, but you are hungry!" she cried. "Eat then." She leaned her chin upon her hands and regarded us, whole fountains of questions brimming up in her eyes.

"How is it, *Larree*, that you have two countries and Goodwin but one?" she asked, at last unable to keep silent longer.

"I was born in Ireland; he in America. But I have dwelt long in his land and my heart loves each," he said.

She nodded, understandingly.

"Are all the men of Ireland like you, *Larree?* As all the men here are like Lugur or Rador? I like to look at you," she went on, with naïve frankness. "I am tired of men like Lugur and Rador. But they are strong," she added, swiftly. "Lugur can hold up ten in his two arms and raise six with but one hand."

We could not understand her numerals and she raised white fingers to illustrate.

"That is little, O lady, to the men of Ireland," replied O'Keefe. "Lo, I have seen one of my race hold up ten times ten of our—what call you that swift thing in which Rador brought us here?"

"Corial," said she.

"Hold up ten times twenty of our *corials* with but two fingers—and these corials of ours——"

"Coria," said she.

"And these coria of ours are each greater in weight than ten of yours. Yes, and I have seen another with but one blow of his hand raise hell!

"And so I have," he murmered to me. "And both at Forty-second and Fifth Avenue, N. Y.—U. S. A."

Yolara considered all this with manifest doubt.

"Hell?" she inquired at last. "I know not the word."

"Well," answered O'Keefe. "Say Muria then. In many ways they are, I gather, O heart's delight, one and the same."

Now the doubt in the blue eyes was strong indeed. She shook her head.

"None of our men can do *that!*" she answered, at length. "Nor do I think you could, *Larree.*"

"Oh, no," said Larry easily. "I never tried to be that strong. I fly," he added, casually.

THE priestess rose to her feet, gazing at him with startled eyes.

"Fly!" she repeated incredulously. "Like a *Zitia?* A bird?"

Larry nodded—and then seeing the dawning command in her eyes, went on hastily.

"Not with my own wings, Yolara. In a—a corial that moves through—what's the word for air, Doc—well, through this—" He made a wide gesture up toward the nebulous haze above us. He took a pencil and on a white cloth made a hasty sketch of an airplane. "In a—a corial like this—" She regarded the sketch gravely, thrust a hand down into her girdle and brought forth a keen-bladed poniard; cut Larry's markings out and placed the fragment carefully aside.

"That I can understand," she said.

"Remarkably intelligent young woman," muttered O'Keefe. "Hope I'm not giving anything away—but she had me."

"But what are your women like, *Larree?* Are they like me? And how many have loved you?" she whispered.

"In all Ireland and America there is none like you, Yolara," he answered. "And take that any way you please," he muttered in English. She took it, it was evident, as it most pleased her.

"Do you have goddesses?" she asked.

"Every woman in Ireland and America, is a goddess"; thus Larry.

"Now that I do not believe." There was both anger and mockery in her eyes. "I know women, *Larree*—and if that were so there would be no peace for men."

"There isn't!" replied he. The anger died out and she laughed, sweetly, understandingly.

"And which goddess do you worship, *Larree?*"

"You!" said Larry O'Keefe, boldly.

"Larry! Larry!" I whispered. "Be careful. It's high explosive."

But the priestess was laughing—little trills of sweet bell notes; and pleasure was in each note.

"You are indeed bold, *Larree,*" she said, "to offer me your worship. Yet I am pleased by your boldness. Still—Lugur is strong; and you are not of those who—what did you say—have tried. And your wings are not here—*Larree!*"

Again her laughter rang out. The Irishman flushed; it was touché for Yolara!

"Fear not for me with Lugur," he said, grimly. "Rather fear for him!"

The laughter died; she looked at him searchingly; a little enigmatic smile about her mouth—so sweet and so cruel.

"Well—we shall see," she murmured. "You say you battle in your world. With what?"

"Oh, with this and with that," answered Larry, airily. "We manage——"

"Have you the *Keth*—I mean that with which I sent Songar into the nothingness?" she asked swiftly.

"See what she's driving at?" O'Keefe spoke to me, swiftly. "Well I do! But here's where the O'Keefe lands.

"I said," he turned to her, "O voice of silver fire, that your spirit is high even as your beauty—and searched out men's souls as does your loveliness their hearts. And now listen, Yolara, for what I speak is truth"—into his eyes came the far-away gaze into his voice the Irish softness— "Lo, in my land of Ireland, this many of your life's length agone—see"—he raised his ten fingers, clenched and unclenched them times twenty—"the mighty men of my race, the Taitha-dà-Dainn, could send men out into the nothingness even as do you with the *Keth.* And this they did by their harpings, and by words spoken—words of power, O Yolara, that have their power still—and by pipings and by slaying sounds.

"There was Cravetheen who played swift flames from his harp, flying flames that ate those they were sent against. And there was Dalua, of Hy Brasil, whose pipes played away from man and beast and all living things their shadows—and at last played them to shadows too, so that wherever Dalua went his shadows that had been men and beast followed like a storm of little rustling leaves; yea, and Bél the Harper, who could make women's hearts run like wax and men's hearts flame to ashes and whose harpings could shatter strong cliffs and bow great trees to the sod——"

HIS eyes were bright, dream filled; she shrank a little from him, faint pallor under the perfect skin.

"I say to you, Yolara, that these things were and are—in Ireland." His voice rang strong. "And I have seen men as many as those that are in your great chamber this many times over"—he clenched his hands once more, perhaps a dozen times—"blasted into nothingness before your *Keth* could even have touched them. Yea—and rocks as mighty as those through which we came lifted up and shattered before the lids could fall over your blue eyes. And this is truth, Yolara—all truth! Stay—have you that little cone of the *Keth* with which you destroyed Songar?"

She nodded, gazing at him, fascinated, fear and puzzlement contending.

"Then use it." He took a vase of crystal from the table, placed it on the threshold that led into the garden. "Use it on this—and I will show you."

"I will use it upon one of the *ladala*—" she began eagerly.

The exaltation dropped from him; there was a touch of horror in the eyes he turned to her; her own dropped before it.

"It shall be as you say," she said hurriedly. She drew the shining cone from her breast; levelled it at the vase. The green ray leaped forth, spread over the crystal, but before its action could even be begun, a flash of light shot from O'Keefe's hand, his automatic spat and the trembling vase flew into fragments. As quickly as he had drawn it, he thrust the pistol back into place and stood there empty handed, looking at her sternly. From the anteroom came shouting, a rush of feet.

Yolara's face was white, her eyes strained—but her voice was unshaken as she called to the clamoring guards:

"It is nothing—go to your places!"

But when the sound of their return had ceased she stared tensely at the Irishman—then looked again at the shattered vase.

"It is true!" she cried, "but see, the *Keth* is—alive!"

I followed her pointing finger. Each broken bit of crystal was vibrating, shaking its particles out into space. Broken it the bullet of Larry's had—but not released it from the grip of the disintegrating force. The priestess' face was triumphant.

"But what matters it, O shining urn of beauty—what matters it to the vase that is broken what happens to its fragments?" asked Larry, gravely—and pointedly.

The triumph died from her face and for a space she was silent; brooding.

"Next," whispered O'Keefe to me. "Lots of sur-

prises in the little box; keep your eye on the opening and see what comes out."

We had not long to wait. There was a sparkle of anger about Yolara, something too of injured pride. She clapped her hands; whispered to the maid who answered her summons, and then sat back regarding us, maliciously.

"You have answered me as to your strength—but you have not proved it; but the *Keth* you have answered. Now answer this!" she said.

She pointed out into the garden. I saw a flowering branch bend and snap as though a hand had broken it—but no hand was there! Saw then another and another bend and break, a little tree sway and fall—and closer and closer to us came the trail of snapping boughs while down into the garden poured the silvery light revealing—nothing! Now a great ewer beside a pillar rose swiftly in air and hurled itself crashing at my feet. Cushions close to us swirled about as though in the vortex of a whirlwind.

And unseen hands held my arms in a mighty clutch fast to my sides, another gripped my throat and I felt a needle-sharp poniard pierce my shirt, touch the skin just over my heart!

"Larry!" I cried, despairingly. I twisted my head; saw that he too was caught in this grip of the invisible. But his face was calm, even amused.

"Keep cool, Doc!" he said. "Remember—she wants to learn the language!"

Now from Yolara burst chime upon chime of mocking laughter. She gave a command—the hands loosened, the poniard withdrew from my heart; suddenly as I had been caught I was free—and unpleasantly weak and shaky.

"Have you *that* in Ireland, *Larree!*" cried the priestess—and once more trembled with laughter.

"A good play, Yolara." His voice was as calm as his face. "But they did that in Ireland even before Dalua piped away his first man's shadow. And in Goodwin's land they make ships—coria that go on water—so you can pass by them and see only sea and sky; and those water coria are each of them many time greater than this whole palace of yours."

But the priestess laughed on.

"It did get me a little," whispered Larry. "That wasn't quite up to my mark. But, God! If we could find that trick out and take it back with us!"

"Not so, *Larree!*" Yolara gasped, through her laughter. "Not so! Goodwin's cry betrayed you!"

HER good humor had entirely returned; she was like a mischievous child pleased over some successful trick; and like a child she cried—"I'll show you!"—signalled again; whispered to the maid who, quickly returning, laid before her a long metal case. Yolara took from her girdle something that looked like a small pencil, pressed it and shot a thin stream of light for all the world like an electric flash, upon its hasp. The lid flew open. Out of it she drew three flat, oval crystals, faint rose in hue. She handed one to O'Keefe and one to me.

"Look!" she commanded, placing the third before her own eyes. I peered through the stone and instantly there leaped into sight, out of thin air—six grinning dwarfs! Each was covered from top of head to soles of feet in a web so tenuous that through it their bodies were plain. The gauzy stuff seemed to vibrate—its strands to run together like quicksilver. I snatched the crystal from my eyes and—the chamber was empty! Put it back—and there were the grinning six!

Yolara gave another sign and they disappeared, even from the crystals.

"It is what they wear, *Larree,*" explained Yolara, graciously. "It is something that came to us from—the Ancient Ones. But we have so few"—she sighed.

"Such treasures must be two-edged swords, Yolara," commented O'Keefe. "For how know you that one within them creeps not to you with hand eager to strike?"

"There is no danger," she said indifferently. "I am the keeper of them."

She mused for a space, then abruptly:

"And now no more. You two are to appear before the Council at a certain time—but fear nothing. You, Goodwin, go with Rador about our city and increase your wisdom. But you, *Larree,* await me here in my garden—" she smiled at him, provocatively—maliciously, too. "For shall not one who has resisted a world of goddesses be given all chance to worship when at last he finds his own?"

She laughed—whole-heartedly and was gone. And at that moment I liked Yolara better than ever I had before and—alas—better than ever I was to in the future.

I noted Rador standing outside the open jade door and started to go, but O'Keefe caught me by the arm.

"Wait a minute," he urged. "About Golden Eyes—you were going to tell me something—it's been on my mind all through that little sparring match."

I told him of the vision that had passed through my closing lids. He listened gravely and then laughed.

"Hell of a lot of privacy in this place!" he grinned. "Ladies who can walk through walls and others with regular invisible cloaks to let 'em flit wherever they please. Oh, well, don't let it get on your nerves, Doc. Remember—everything's natural! That robe stuff is just camouflage, of course. But Lord, if we could only get a piece of it!"

"The material simply admits all light-vibrations, or perhaps curves them, just as the opacities cut them off," I answered. "A man on the X-ray screen is partly invisible; this makes him wholly so. He doesn't register, as the people of the motion-picture profession say."

"Camouflage," repeated Larry. "And as for the Shining One— Say!" he snorted. "I'd like to set the O'Keefe banshee up against it. I'll bet that old resourceful Irish body would give it the first three bites and a strangle hold and wallop it before it knew it had 'em. Oh! Wow! Boy Howdy!"

I heard him still chuckling gleefully over this vision as I passed along the opal wall with the green dwarf.

A shell was awaiting us. I paused before entering it to examine the polished surface of runway

and great road. It was obsidian—volcanic glass of pale emerald, unflawed, translucent, with no sign of block or juncture. I examined the shell.

"What makes it go?" I asked Rador. At a word from him the driver touched a concealed spring and an aperture appeared beneath the control-lever, of which I have spoken in a preceding chapter. Within was a small cube of black crystal, through whose sides I saw, dimly, a rapidly revolving, glowing ball, not more than two inches in diameter. Beneath the cube was a curiously shaped, slender cylinder winding down into the lower body of the Nautilus whorl.

"Watch!" said Rador. He motioned me into the vehicle and took a place beside me. The driver touched the lever; a stream of coruscations flew from the ball down into the cylinder. The shell started smoothly, and as the tiny torrent of shining particles increased it gathered speed.

"The *corial* does not touch the road," explained Rador. "It is lifted so far"—he held his forefinger and thumb less than a sixteenth of an inch apart—"above it."

And perhaps here is the best place to explain the activation of the shells or *coria*. The force utilized was atomic energy. Passing from the whirling ball the ions darted through the cylinder to two bands of a peculiar metal affixed to the base of the vehicles somewhat like skids of a sled. Impinging upon these they produced a partial negation of gravity, lifting the shell slightly, and at the same time creating a powerful repulsive force or thrust that could be directed backward, forward, or sidewise at the will of the driver. The creation of this energy and the mechanism of its utilization were, briefly, as follows:

> [Dr. Goodwin's lucid and exceedingly comprehensive description of this extraordinary mechanism has been deleted by the Executive Council of the International Association of Science as too dangerously suggestive to scientists of the Central European Powers with which we were so recently at war. It is allowable, however, to state that his observations are in the possession of experts in this country, who are, unfortunately, hampered in their research not only by the scarcity of the radioactive elements that we know, but also by the lack of the element or elements unknown to us that entered into the formation of the fiery ball within the cube of black crystal. Nevertheless, as the principle is so clear, it is believed that these difficulties will ultimately be overcome.—J. B. K., President, I. A. of S.]

THE wide, glistening road was gay with the *coria*. They darted in and out of the gardens; within them the fair-haired, extraordinarily beautiful women on their cushions were like princesses of Elfland, caught in gorgeous fairy webs, resting within the hearts of flowers. In some shells were flaxen-haired, dwarfish men of Lugur's type; sometimes black-polled brother officers of Rador; often raven-tressed girls, plainly handmaidens of the women; and now and then beauties of the lower folk went by with one of the blond dwarfs.

We swept around the turn that made of the jewel-like roadway an enormous horseshoe and, speedily, upon our right the cliffs through which we had come in our journey from the Moon Pool began to march forward beneath their mantels of moss. They formed a gigantic abutment, a titanic salient. It had been from the very front of this salient's invading angle that we had emerged; on each side of it the precipices, faintly glowing, drew back and vanished into distance.

The slender, graceful bridges under which we skimmed ended at openings in the upflung, far walls of verdure. Each had its little garrison of soldiers. Through some of the openings a rivulet of the green obsidian river passed. These were roadways to the farther country, to the land of the *ladala*, Rador told me; adding that none of the lesser folk could cross into the pavilioned city unless summoned or with pass.

We turned the bend of the road and flew down that farther emerald ribbon we had seen from the great oval. Before us rose the shining cliffs and the lake. A half-mile, perhaps, from these the last of the bridges flung itself. It was more massive and about it hovered a spirit of ancientness lacking in the other spans; also its garrison was larger and at its base the tangent way was guarded by two massive structures, somewhat like blockhouses, between which it ran. Something about it aroused in me an intense curiosity.

"Where does that road lead, Rador?" I asked.

"To the one place above all of which I may not tell you, Goodwin," he answered. And again I wondered.

We skimmed slowly out upon the great pier. Far to the left was the prismatic, rainbow curtain between the Cyclopean pillars. On the white waters graceful shells—lacustrian replicas of the Elf chariots—swam, but none was near that distant web of wonder.

"Rador—what is that?" I asked.

"It is the Veil of the Shining One!" he answered slowly.

Was the Shining One that which we named the Dweller?

"What is the Shining One?" I cried, eagerly. Again he was silent. Nor did he speak until we had turned on our homeward way.

And lively as my interest, my scientific curiosity, were—I was conscious suddenly of acute depression. Beautiful, wondrously beautiful this place was—and yet in its wonder dwelt a keen edge of menace, of unease—of inexplicable, inhuman woe; as though in a secret garden of God a soul should sense upon it the gaze of some lurking spirit of evil which some way, somehow, had crept into the sanctuary and only bided its time to spring.

CHAPTER XVII

The Leprechaun

THE shell carried us straight back to the house of Yolara. Larry was awaiting me. We stood again before the tenebrous wall, where first we had faced the priestess and the Voice. And as we stood, again the portal appeared with all its disconcerting, magical abruptness.

But now the scene was changed. Around the jet

table were grouped a number of figures—Lugur, Yolara beside him; seven others—all of them fair-haired and all men save one who sat at the left of the priestess—an old, old woman, how old I could not tell, her face bearing traces of beauty that must once have been as great as Yolara's own, but now ravaged, in some way awesome; through its ruins the fearful, malicious gaiety shining out like a spirit of joy held within a corpse!

Began then our examination, for such it was. And as it progressed I was more and more struck by the change in the O'Keefe. All flippancy was gone, rarely did his sense of humor reveal itself in any of his answers. He was like a cautious swordsman, fencing, guarding, studying his opponent; or rather, like a chess-player who keeps sensing some far-reaching purpose in the game: alert, contained, watchful. Always he stressed the power of our surface races, their multitudes, their solidarity.

Their questions were myriad. What were our occupations? Our system of government? How great were the waters? The land? Intensely interested were they in the World War just ended, querying minutely into its causes. In our weapons their interest was avid. And they were exceedingly minute in their examination of us as to the ruins which had excited our curiosity; their position and surroundings—and if others than ourselves might be expected to find and pass through their entrance!

At this I shot a glance at Lugur. He did not seem unduly interested. I wondered if the German had told him as yet of the girl of the rosy wall of the Moon Pool Chamber and the real reasons for our search. Then I answered as briefly as possible—omitting all reference to these things. The red dwarf watched me with unmistakable amusement—and I knew von Hetzdorp had told him. But clearly Lugur had kept his information even from Yolara; and as clearly she had spoken to none of that episode when O'Keefe's automatic had shattered the *Keth*-smitten vase. Again I felt that sense of deep bewilderment—of helpless search for clue to all the tangle.

For two hours we were questioned and then the priestess called Rador and let us go.

Larry was sombre as we returned. He walked about the room uneasily.

"Hell's brewing here all right," he said at last, stopping before me. "I can't make out just the particular brand—that's all that bothers me. We're going to have a stiff fight, that's sure. What I want to do quick is to find the Golden Girl, Doc. Haven't seen her on the wall lately, have you?" he queried, hopefully fantastic.

"Laugh if you want to," he went on. "But she's our best bet. It's going to be a race between her and the O'Keefe banshee—but I put my money on her. I had a queer experience while I was in that garden, after you'd left." His voice grew solemn. "Did you ever see a leprechaun, Doc?" I shook my head again, as solemnly. "He's a little man in green," said Larry. "Oh, about as high as your knee. I saw one once—in Carntogher Woods. And as I sat there, half asleep, in Yolara's garden, the living spit of him stepped out from one of those bushes, twirling a little shillalah.

"'It's a tight box ye're gettin' in, Larry avick,' said he, 'but don't ye be downhearted, lad.'

"'I'm carrying on,' said I, 'but you're a long way from Ireland,' I said, or thought I did.

"'Ye've a lot o' friends there,' he answered. 'An' where the heart rests the feet are swift to follow. Not that I'm sayin' I'd like to live here, Larry,' said he.

"'I know where my heart is now,' I told him. 'It rests on a girl with golden eyes and the hair and swan-white breast of Eilidh the Fair—but me feet don't seem to get me to her,' I said."

The brogue thickened.

"An' the little man in green nodded his head an' whirled his shillalah.

"'It's what I came to tell ye,' says he. 'Don't ye fall for the *Bhean-Nimher*, the serpent woman wit' the blue eyes; she's a daughter of Ivor, lad—an' don't ye do nothin' to make the brown-haired colleen ashamed o' ye, Larry O'Keefe. I knew yer great, great grandfather an' his before him, aroon,' says he, 'an' wan o' the O'Keefe failin's is to think their hearts big enough to hold all the wimmin o' the world. A heart's built to hold only wan permanently, Larry,' he says, 'an' I'm warnin' ye a nice girl don't like to move into a place all cluttered up wid another's washin' an' mendin' an' cookin' an' other things pertainin' to general wife work. Not that I think the blue-eyed wan is keen for mendin' an' cookin'!' says he.

"'You don't have to be comin' all this way to tell me that,' I answer.

"'Well, I'm just a tellin' you,' he says. 'Ye've got some rough knocks comin', Larry. In fact, ye're in for a very devil of a time. But, remember that ye're the O'Keefe,' says he. 'An' while the bhoys are all wid ye, avick, ye've got to be on the job yourself.'

"'I hope,' I tell him, 'that the O'Keefe banshee can find her way here in time—that is, if it's necessary, which I hope it won't be.'

"'Don't ye worry about that,' says he. 'Not that she's keen on leavin' the ould sod, Larry. The good ould soul's in quite a state o' mind about ye, aroon. I don't mind tellin' ye, lad, that she's mobilizin' all the clan an' if she *has* to come for ye, avick, they'll be wid her an' they'll sweep this joint clean before ye go. What they'll do to it 'll make the Big Wind look like a summer breeze on Lough Lene! An' that's about all, Larry. We thought a voice from the Green Isle would cheer ye. Don't fergit that ye're the O'Keefe—an' I say it again—all the bhoys are wid ye. But we want t' kape bein' proud o' ye, lad!'

"An' I looked again and there was only a bush waving."

There wasn't a smile in my heart—or if there was it was a very tender one.

"I'm going to bed," he said abruptly. "Keep an eye on the wall, Doc!"

BETWEEN the seven sleeps that followed, Larry and I saw but little of each other. Yolara sought him more and more. Thrice we were called before the Council; once we were at a great feast, whose splendors and surprises I can never forget. Largely I was in the company of Rador.

Together we two passed the green barriers into the dwelling-place of the *ladala.*

They seemed provided with everything needful for life. But everywhere was an oppressiveness, a gathering together of hate, that was spiritual rather than material—as tangible as the latter and far, far more menacing!

"They do not like to dance with the Shining One," was Rador's constant and only reply to my efforts to find the cause.

Once I had concrete evidence of the mood. Glancing behind me, I saw a white, vengeful face peer from behind a tree-trunk, a hand lift, a shining dart speed from it straight toward Rador's back. Instinctively I thrust him aside. He turned upon me angrily. I pointed to where the little missile lay, still quivering, on the ground. He gripped my hand.

"That, some day I will repay!" he said. I looked again at the thing. At its end was a tiny cone covered with a glistening, gelatinous substance.

Rador pulled from a tree beside us a fruit somewhat like an apple.

"Look!" he said. He dropped it upon the dart—and at once, before my eyes, in less than ten seconds, the fruit had rotted away!

"That's what would have happened to Rador but for you, friend!" he said.

Come now between this and the prelude to the latter half of the drama whose history this narrative is—only scattering and necessarily fragmentary observations.

First—the nature of the ebon opacities, blocking out the spaces between the pavilion-pillars or covering their tops like roofs. These were magnetic fields, light absorbers, negativing the vibrations of radiance; literally screens of electric force which formed as impervious a barrier to light as would have been formed by screens of steel.

They instantaneously made night appear in a place where no night was. But they interposed no obstacle to air or to sound. They were extremely simple in their inception—no more miraculous than is glass, which, inversely, admits the vibrations of light, but shuts out those coarser ones we call air—and, partly, those others which produce upon our auditory nerves the effects we call sound.

Briefly, their mechanism was this:

[For the same reason that Dr. Goodwin's exposition of the mechanism of the atomic engines was deleted, his description of the light-destroying screens has been deleted by the Executive Council.—J. B. K., President, I. A. of S.]

There were two favored classes of the *ladala*—the soldiers and the dream-makers. The dream-makers were the most astonishing social phenomena, I think, of all. Denied by their circumscribed environment the wider experiences of us of the outer world, the Murians had perfected an amazing system of escape through the imagination.

They were, too, intensely musical. Their favorite instruments were double flutes; immensely complex pipe-organs; harps, great and small. They had another remarkable instrument made up of a double octave of small drums which gave forth percussions remarkably disturbing to the emotional centres.

It was this love of music that gave rise to one of the few truly humorous incidents of our caverned life. Larry came to me—it was just after our fourth sleep, I remember.

"Come on to a concert," he said.

We skimmed off to one of the bridge garrisons. Rador called the twoscore guards to attention; and then, to my utter stupefaction, the whole company, O'Keefe leading them, roared out the *Marseillaise. "Allons, enfants de la patrie!"* they sang— in a closer approach to the French than might have been expected ten or fifty miles below France level. *"Marchons! Marchons!"* they bellowed.

He quivered with suppressed mirth at my paralysis of surprise.

"Taught 'em that for von Hetzdorp's benefit!" he gasped. "The war's over, but wait till that fellow hears it. He'll blow up.

"Just wait until you hear Yolara lisp a pretty little thing I taught her," said Larry as we set back for what we now called home. There was an impish twinkle in his eyes.

And I did hear. For it was not many minutes later that the priestess condescended to command me to come to her with O'Keefe.

"Show Goodwin how much you have learned of our speech, O lady of the lips of honeyed flame!" murmured Larry.

She hesitated; smiled at him, and then from that perfect mouth, out of the exquisite throat, in the voice that was like the chiming of little silver bells, she trilled a melody familiar to me indeed:

"She's only a bird in a gilded cage,
A bee-yu-tiful sight to see—"

And so on to the bitter end.

"She thinks it's a love-song," said Larry when we had left. "It's only part of a repertoire I'm teaching her. Honestly, Doc, it's the only way I can keep my mind clear when I'm with her," he went on earnestly. "She's a devil-ess from hell—but a wonder. Whenever I find myself going I get her to sing that, or *Take Back Your Gold!* or some other ancient lay, and I'm back again—*pronto*—with the right perspective! *Pop* goes all the mystery! 'Hell!' I say, 'she's only a woman!' "

CHAPTER XVIII

The Amphitheatre of Jet

FOR hours the black-haired folk had been streaming across the bridges, flowing along the promenade by scores and by hundreds, drifting down toward the gigantic seven-terraced temple whose interior I had never as yet seen, and from whose towering exterior, indeed, I had always been kept far enough away—unobtrusively, but none the less decisively—to prevent any real observation. The structure, I had estimated, nevertheless, could not reach less than a thousand feet above its silvery base, and the diameter of its circular foundation was about the same.

I wondered what was bringing the *ladala* into Lora, and where they were vanishing. All of them were flower-crowned with the luminous, lovely blooms—old and young, slender, mocking-eyed girls, dwarfed youths, mothers with their babes, gnomed oldsters—on they poured, silent for the most part

and sullen—a sullenness that held acid bitterness even as their subtle, half-sinister, half-gay malice seemed tempered into little keen-edged flames, oddly, menacingly defiant.

There were many of the green-clad soldiers along the way, and the garrison of the only bridge span I could see had certainly been doubled.

Wondering still, I turned from my point of observation and made my way back to our pavilion, hoping that Larry, who had been with Yolara for the past two hours, had returned. Hardly had I reached it before Rador came hurrying up, in his manner a curious exultancy mingled with what in any one else I would have called a decided nervousness.

"Come!" he commanded before I could speak. "The Council has made decision—and *Larree* is awaiting you."

"What has been decided?" I panted as we sped along the mosaic path that led to the house of Yolara. "And why is Larry awaiting me?"

And at his answer I felt my heart pause in its beat and through me race a wave of mingled panic and eagerness.

"The Shining One dances!" had answered the green dwarf. "And you are to worship!"

What was this dancing of the Shining One, of which so often he had spoken?

Whatever my forebodings, Larry evidently had none.

"Great stuff!" he cried, when we had met in the great antechamber now empty of the dwarfs. "Hope it will be worth seeing—have to be something damned good, though, to catch me, after what I've seen of shows at the front," he added.

And remembering, with a little shock of apprehension, that he had no knowledge of the Dweller beyond my poor description of it—for there are no words actually to describe what that miracle of interwoven glory and horror was—I wondered what Larry O'Keefe would say and do when he did behold it!

Rador began to show impatience.

"Come!" he urged. "There is much to be done—and the time grows short!"

He led us to a tiny fountain room in whose miniature pool the white waters were concentrated, pearl-like and opalescent in their circling rim.

"Bathe!" he commanded; and set the example by stripping himself and plunging within. Only a minute or two did the green dwarf allow us, and he checked us as we were about to don our clothing.

THEN, to my intense embarrassment, without warning, two of the black-haired girls entered, bearing robes of a peculiar dull-blue hue. At our manifest discomfort Rador's laughter roared out. He took the garments from the pair, motioned them to leave us, and, still laughing, threw one around me. Its texture was soft, but decidedly metallic—like some blue metal spun to the fineness of a spider's thread. The garment buckled tightly at the throat, was girdled at the waist, and, below this cincture, fell to the floor, its folds being held together by a half-dozen looped cords; from the shoulders a hood resembling a monk's cowl.

Rador cast this over my head; it completely covered my face, but was of so transparent a texture that I could see, though somewhat mistily, through it. Finally he handed us both a pair of long gloves of the same material and high stockings, the feet of which were digitated—five-toed.

And again his laughter rang out at our manifest surprise.

"The priestess of the Shining One does not altogether trust the Shining One's Voice," he said at last. "And these are to guard against any sudden—errors. And fear not, Goodwin," he went on kindly. "Not for the Shining One itself would Yolara see harm come to *Larree* here—nor, because of him, to you. But I would not stake much on the great white one. And for him I am sorry, for him I do like well."

"Is he to be with us?" asked Larry eagerly.

"He is to be where we go," replied the dwarf soberly.

Grimly Larry reached down and drew from his uniform his automatic. He popped a fresh clip into the pocket fold of his girdle. The pistol he slung high up beneath his arm-pit.

The green dwarf looked at the weapon curiously. O'Keefe tapped it.

"This," said Larry, "slays quicker than the *Keth*—I take it so no harm shall come to the blue-eyed one whose name is Olaf. If I should raise it—be you not in its way, Rador!" he added significantly.

The dwarf nodded again, his eyes sparkling. He thrust a hand out to both of us.

"A change comes," he said. "What it is I know not, nor how it will fall. But this remember—Rador is more friend to you than you yet can know. And now let us go!" he ended abruptly.

He led us, not through the entrance, but into a sloping passage ending in a blind wall; touched a symbol graven there, and it opened, precisely as had the rosy barrier of the Moon Pool Chamber. And, just as there, but far smaller, was a passage end, a low curved wall facing a shaft not black as had been that abode of living darkness, but faintly luminescent. Rador leaned over the wall. The mechanism clicked and started; the door swung shut; the sides of the car slipped into place, and we swept swiftly down the passage; overhead the wind whistled. In a few moments the moving platform began to slow down. It stopped in a closed chamber no larger than itself.

Rador drew his poniard and struck twice upon the wall with its hilt. Immediately a panel moved away, revealing a space filled with faint, misty blue radiance. And at each side of the opened portal stood four of the dwarfish men, grey-headed, old, clad in flowing garments of white, each pointing toward us a short silver rod.

Rador drew from his girdle a ring and held it out to the first dwarf. He examined it, handed it to the one beside him, and not until each had inspected the ring did they lower their curious weapons; containers of that terrific energy they called the *Keth*, I thought; and later was to know that I had been right.

We stepped out; the doors closed behind us. The place was weird enough. Its pave was a greenish-blue stone resembling lapis-lazuli. On each side were high pedestals holding carved figures of the

same material. There were perhaps a score of these, but in the mistiness I could not make out their outlines. A droning, rushing roar beat upon our ears; filled the whole cavern.

"I smell the sea," said Larry suddenly.

The roaring became deep-toned, clamorous, and close in front of us a rift opened. Twenty feet in width, it cut the cavern floor and vanished into the blue mist on each side. The cleft was spanned by one solid slab of rock not more than two yards wide. It had neither railing nor other protection.

The four leading priests marched out upon it one by one, and we followed. In the middle of the span they knelt. Ten feet beneath us was a torrent of blue sea-water racing with prodigious speed between polished walls. It gave the impression of vast depth. It roared as it sped by, and far to the right was a low arch through which it disappeared. It was so swift that its surface shone like polished blue steel, and from it came the blessed, *our worldly*, familiar ocean breath that strengthened my soul amazingly and made me realize how earth-sick I was.

Whence came the stream, I marvelled, forgetting for the moment, as we passed on again, all else. Were we closer to the surface of earth than I had thought, or was this some mighty flood falling through an opening in sea floor, Heaven alone knew how many miles above us, losing itself in deeper abysses beyond these? How near and how far this was from the truth I was to learn—and never did truth come to man in more dreadful guise!

The roaring fell away, the blue haze lessened. In front of us stretched a wide flight of steps, huge as those which had led us into the courtyard of Nan-Tauach through the ruined sea-gate. We scaled it; it narrowed; from above light poured through a still narrower opening. Side by side Larry and I passed out of it.

WE had emerged upon an enormous platform of what seemed to be glistening ivory. It stretched before us for a hundred yards or more and then shelved gently into the white waters. Opposite—not a mile away—was that prodigious web of woven rainbows Rador had called the Veil of the Shining One. There it shone in all its unearthly grandeur, on each side of the Cyclopean pillars, as though a mountain should stretch up arms raising between them a fairy banner of auroral glories. Beneath it was the curved, scimitar sweep of the pier with its clustered, gleaming temples.

Before that brief, fascinated glance was done, there dropped upon my soul a sensation as of brooding weight intolerable; a spiritual oppression as though some vastness was falling, pressing, stifling me. I turned—and Larry caught me as I reeled.

"Steady! Steady, old man!" he whispered.

At first all that my staggering consciousness could realize was an immensity, an immeasurable uprearing that brought with it the same throat-gripping vertigo as comes from gazing downward from some great height—then a blur of white faces—intolerable shinings of hundreds upon thousands of eyes. Huge, incredibly huge, a colossal amphitheatre of jet, a stupendous semi-circle, held within its mighty arc the ivory platform on which I stood.

It reared itself almost perpendicularly hundreds of feet up into the sparkling heavens, and thrust down on each side its ebon bulwarks—like monstrous paws. Now, the giddiness from its sheer greatness passing, I saw that it was indeed an amphitheatre sloping slightly backward tier after tier, and that the white blur of faces against its blackness, the gleaming of countless eyes were those of myriads of the people who sat silent, flower-garlanded, their gaze focused upon the rainbow curtain and sweeping over me like a torrent—tangible, appalling!

Five hundred feet beyond, the smooth, high retaining wall of the amphitheatre raised itself—above it the first terrace of the seats, and above this, dividing the tiers for another half a thousand feet upward, set within them like a panel, was a dead-black surface in which shone faintly with a bluish radiance a gigantic disk; above it and around it a cluster of innumerable smaller ones.

On each side of me, bordering the platform, were scores of small pillared alcoves, a low wall stretching across their fronts; delicate, fretted grills shielding them, save where in each lattice an opening stared—it came to me that they were like those stalls in ancient Gothic cathedrals wherein for centuries had kneeled paladins and people of my own race on earth's fair face. And within these alcoves were gathered, score upon score, the elfin beauties, the dwarfish men of the fair-haired folk. At my right, a few feet from the opening through which we had come, a passageway led back between the fretted stalls. Half-way between us and the massive base of the amphitheatre a dais rose. Up the platform to it a wide ramp ascended; and on ramp and dais and along the centre of the gleaming platform down to where it kissed the white waters, a broad ribbon of the radiant flowers lay like a fairy carpet.

On one side of this dais, meshed in a silken web that hid no line or curve of her sweet body, white flesh gleaming through its folds, stood Yolara; and opposite her, crowned with a circlet of flashing blue stones, his mighty body stark bare, was Lugur!

O'Keefe drew a long breath; Rador touched my arm and, still dazed, I let myself be drawn into the aisle and through a corridor that ran behind the alcoves. At the back of one of these the green dwarf paused, opened a door, and motioned us within.

Entering, I found that we were exactly opposite where the ramp ran up to the dais—and that Yolara was not more than fifty feet away. She glanced at O'Keefe and smiled. Her eyes were ablaze with little dancing points of light; her body seemed to palpitate, the rounded delicate muscles beneath the translucent skin to run with joyful little eager waves!

Larry whistled softly.

"There's von Hetzdorp!" he said.

I looked where he pointed. Opposite us sat the German, clothed as we were, leaning forward, his eyes eager behind his glasses; but if he saw us he gave no sign.

"And there's Olaf!" said O'Keefe.

Beneath the carved stall in which sat the German was an aperture and within it was Huldricksson.

Unprotected by pillars or by grills, opening clear upon the platform, near him stretched the trail of flowers up to the great dais which Lugur and Yolara the priestess guarded. He sat alone, and my heart went out to him.

O'Keefe's face softened.

"Bring him here," he said to Rador.

The green dwarf was looking at the Norseman, too, a shade of pity upon his mocking face. He shook his head.

"Wait!" he said. "You can do nothing now—and it may be there will be no need to do anything," he added; but I could feel that there was little of conviction in his words.

CHAPTER XIX

The Madness of Olaf

YOLARA threw her white arms high. From the mountainous tiers came a mighty sigh; a rippling ran through them. And upon the moment, before Yolara's arms fell, there issued, apparently from the air around us, a peal of sound that might have been the shouting of some playful god hurling great suns through the net of stars. It was like the deepest notes of all the organs in the world combined in one; summoning, majestic, cosmic!

It held within it the thunder of the spheres rolling through the infinite, the birth-song of suns made manifest in the womb of space; echoes of creation's supernal chord! It shook the body like a pulse from the heart of the universe—pulsed—and died away.

On its death came a blaring as of all the trumpets of conquering hosts since the first Pharaoh led his swarms—triumphal, compelling! Alexander's clamouring hosts, brazen-throated wolf-horns of Cæsar's legions, blare of trumpets of Genghis Khan and his golden horde, clangor of the locust levies of Tamerlane, bugles of Napoleon's armies—war-shout of all earth's conquerors! And it died!

Fast upon it, a throbbing, muffled tumult of harp sounds, mellownesses of myriads of wood horns, the subdued sweet shrilling of multitudes of flutes, Pandean pipings—inviting, carrying with them the calling of waterfalls in the hidden places, rushing brooks and murmuring forest winds—calling, calling, languorous, lulling, dripping into the brain like the very honeyed essence of sound.

And after them a silence in which the memory of the music seemed to beat, to beat ever more faintly, through every quivering nerve.

From me all fear, all apprehension, had fled. In their place was nothing but joyous anticipation, a supernal freedom from even the shadow of the shadow of care or sorrow; not now did anything matter—Olaf or his haunted, hate-filled eyes; Throckmartin or his fate—nothing of pain, nothing of agony, nothing of striving or endeavor or despair in that wide outer world that had turned suddenly to a troubled dream.

Once more the first great note pealed out! Once more it died and from the clustered spheres a kaleidoscopic blaze shot as though drawn from the majestic sound itself. The many-colored rays darted across the white waters and sought the face of the irised Veil. As they touched, it sparkled, flamed, wavered, and shook with fountains of prismatic color.

The light increased—and in its intensity the silver air darkened. Faded into shadow that white mosaic of flower-crowned faces set in the amphitheatre of jet, and vast shadows dropped upon the high-flung tiers and shrouded them. But on the skirts of the rays the fretted stalls in which we sat with the fair-haired ones blazed out, iridescent, like jewels.

I was sensible of an acceleration of every pulse; a wild stimulation of every nerve. I felt myself being lifted above the world—close to the threshold of the high gods—soon their essence and their power would stream out into me! I glanced at Larry. His eyes were—wild—with life!

I looked at Olaf—and in his face was none of this—only hate, and hate, and hate.

The peacock waves streamed out over the waters, cleaving the seeming darkness, a rainbow path of glory. And the Veil flashed as though all the rainbows that had ever shone were burning within it. Again the mighty sound pealed.

Into the centre of the Veil the light drew itself, grew into an intolerable brightness—and with a storm of tinklings, a tempest of crystalline notes, a tumult of tiny chimings, through it sped—the Shining One!

Straight down that radiant path, its high-flung plumes of feathery flame shimmering, its coruscating spirals whirling, its seven globes of seven colors shining above its glowing core, it raced toward us. The hurricane of bells of diamond glass were jubilant, joyous. I felt O'Keefe grip my arm; Yolara threw her white arms out in a welcoming gesture; I heard from the tiers a sigh of rapture—and in it a poignant, wailing undertone of agony!

Over the waters, down the light stream, to the end of the ivory pier, flew the Shining One. Through its crystal *pizzicati* drifted inarticulate murmurings—deadly sweet, stilling the heart and setting it leaping madly.

FOR a moment it paused, poised itself, and then came whirling down the flower path to its priestess, slowly, ever more slowly. It hovered for a moment between the woman and the dwarf, as though contemplating them; turned to her with its storm of tinklings softened, its murmurings infinitely caressing. Bent toward it, Yolara seemed to gather within herself pulsing waves of power; she was terrifying; gloriously, maddeningly evil; and as gloriously, maddeningly heavenly! Aphrodite and the Virgin! Tanith of the Carthaginians and St. Bride of the Isles! A queen of hell and a princess of heaven—in one!

Only for a moment did that which we had called the Dweller and which these named the Shining One, pause. It swept up the ramp to the dais, rested there, slowly turning, plumes and spirals lacing and unlacing, throbbing, pulsing. Now its nucleus grew plainer, stronger—human in a fashion, and all inhuman; neither man nor woman; neither god nor devil; subtly partaking of all. Nor could I doubt that whatever it was, within that shining nucleus was something sentient; something that had will and

energy, and in some awful, supernormal fashion—intelligence!

Another trumpeting—a sound of stones opening—a long, low wail of utter anguish—something moved shadowy in the river of light, and slowly at first, then ever more rapidly, shapes swam through it. There were half a score of them—girls and youths, women and men. The Shining One poised itself, regarded them. They drew closer, and in the eyes of each and in their faces was the bud of that awful intermingling of emotions, of joy and sorrow, ecstasy and terror, that I had seen in full blossom on Throckmartin's.

The Thing began again its murmurings—now infinitely caressing, coaxing—like the song of a siren from some witched star! And the bell-sounds rang out—compellingly, calling—calling—calling—

I saw Olaf lean far out of his place; saw, half-consciously, at Lugur's signal, three of the dwarfs creep in and take places, unnoticed, behind him.

Now the first of the figures rushed upon the dais—and paused. It was the girl who had been brought before Yolara when the gnome named Songar was driven into the nothingness! With all the quickness of light a spiral of the Shining One stretched out and encircled her.

At its touch there was an infinitely dreadful shrinking and, it seemed, a simultaneous hurling of herself into its radiance. As it wrapped its swirls around her, permeated her—the crystal chorus burst forth—tumultuously; through and through her the radiance pulsed. Began then that infinitely dreadful, but infinitely glorious rhythm they called the dance of the Shining One. And as the girl swirled within its sparkling mists another and another flew into its embrace, until, at last, the dais was an incredible vision; a mad star's Witches' Sabbath; an altar of white faces and bodies gleaming through living flame; transfused with rapture insupportable and horror that was hellish—and ever, radiant plumes and spirals expanding, the core of the Shining One waxed—growing greater—as it consumed, as it drew into and through itself the life-force of these lost ones!

So they spun, interlaced—and there began to pulse from them life, vitality, as though the very essence of nature was filling us. Dimly I recognized that what I was beholding was vampirism inconceivable! The banked tiers chanted. The mighty sounds pealed forth!

It was a Saturnalia of demigods!

Then, whirling, bell-notes storming, the Shining One withdrew slowly from the dais down the ramp, still embracing, still interwoven with those who had thrown themselves into its spirals. They drifted with it as though half-carried in dreadful dance; white faces sealed—forever—into that semblance of those who held within linked God and devil—I covered my eyes!

I heard a gasp from O'Keefe; opened my eyes and sought his; saw the wildness vanish from them as he strained forward. Olaf had leaned far out, and as he did so the dwarfs beside him caught him, and whether by design or through his own swift, involuntary movement, thrust him half into the Dweller's path. The Dweller paused in its gyrations—seemed to watch him. The Norseman's face was crimson, his eyes blazing. He threw himself back and, with one defiant shout, gripped one of the dwarfs about the middle and sent him hurtling through the air, straight at the radiant Thing! A whirling mass of legs and arms, the dwarf flew—then in mid-flight stopped as though some gigantic invisible hand had caught him, and—was dashed down upon the platform not a yard from the Shining One!

Like a broken spider he moved—feebly—once, twice. From the Dweller shot a shimmering tentacle—touched him—recoiled. Its crystal tinklings changed into an angry chiming. From all about—jewelled stalls and jet peak—came a sigh of incredulous horror.

LUGUR leaped forward. On the instant Larry was over the low barrier between the pillars, rushing to the Norseman's side. And even as they ran there was another wild shout from Olaf, and he hurled himself out, straight at the throat of the Dweller!

But before he could touch the Shining One, now motionless—and never was the thing more horrible than then, with the purely human suggestion of surprise plain in its poise—Larry had struck him aside.

I tried to follow—and was held by Rador. He was trembling—but not with fear. In his face was incredulous hope, inexplicable eagerness.

"Wait!" he said. "Wait!"

The Shining One stretched out a slow spiral, and as it did so I saw the bravest thing man has ever witnessed. Instantly O'Keefe thrust himself between it and Olaf, pistol out. The tentacle touched him, and the dull blue of his robe flashed out in blinding, intense azure light. From the automatic in his gloved hand came three quick bursts of flame straight into the Thing. The Dweller drew back; the bell-sounds swelled.

Lugur paused, his hands darted up, and in it was one of the silver *Keth* cones. But before he could flash it upon the Norseman, Larry had unlooped his robe, thrown its fold over Olaf, and, holding him with one hand away from the Shining One, thrust with the other his pistol into the dwarf's stomach. His lips moved, but I could not hear what he said. But Lugur understood, for his hand dropped.

Now Yolara was there—all this had taken barely more than five seconds. She thrust herself between the three men and the Dweller. She spoke to it—and the wild buzzing died down; the gay crystal tinklings burst forth again. The Thing murmured to her—began to whirl—faster, faster—passed down the ivory pier, out upon the waters, bearing with it, meshed in its light, the sacrifices—swept on ever more swiftly, triumphantly and turning, turning with its ghastly crew, vanished through the Veil!

Abruptly the polychromatic path snapped out. The silver light poured in upon us. From all the amphitheatre arose a clamour, a shouting. Von Hetzdorp, his eyes staring, was leaning out, listening. Unrestrained now by Rador, I vaulted the wall and rushed forward. But not before I had heard the green dwarf murmur:

"There is something stronger than the Shining One! Two things—yea—a strong heart—and hate!"

Olaf, panting, eyes glazed, trembling, shrank beneath my hand.

"The devil that took my Helma!" I heard him whisper. "The Shining Devil!"

"Both these men," Lugur was raging, "they shall dance with the Shining One. And this one, too." He pointed at me malignantly.

"This man is mine," said the priestess, and her voice was menacing. She rested her hand on Larry's shoulder. "He shall not dance. No—nor his friend! I have told you I care not for this one!" She pointed to Olaf.

"Neither this man, nor this," said Larry, "shall be harmed. This is my word, Yolara!"

"Even so," she answered quietly, "my lord!"

I saw von Hetzdorp stare at O'Keefe with a new and curiously speculative interest. Lugur's eyes grew hellish; he raised his arms as though to strike her. Larry's pistol prodded him rudely enough.

"No rough stuff now, kid!" said O'Keefe in English. The red dwarf quivered, turned—caught a robe from a priest standing by, and threw it over himself. The *ladala*, shouting, gesticulating, fighting with the soldiers, were jostling down from the tiers of jet.

"Come!" commanded Yolara—her eyes rested upon Larry. "Your heart is great, indeed—my lord!" she murmured; and her voice was very sweet. "Come!"

"This man comes with us, Yolara," said O'Keefe pointing to Olaf.

"Bring him," she said. "Bring him—only tell him to look no more upon me as before!" she added fiercely.

Beside her the three of us passed along the stalls, where sat the fair-haired, now silent, at gaze, as though in the grip of some great doubt. Silently Olaf strode beside me. Rador had disappeared. Down the stairway, through the hall of turquoise mist, over the rushing sea-stream we went and stood beside the wall through which we had entered. The white-robed ones had gone.

Yolara pressed; the portal opened. We stepped upon the car; she took the lever; we raced through the faintly luminous corridor to the house of the priestess.

And one thing now I knew sick at heart and soul the truth had come to me—no more need to search for Throckmartin. Behind that Veil, in the lair of the Dweller, dead-alive like those we had just seen swim in its shining train was he, and Edith, Stanton and Thora and Olaf Huldricksson's wife!

THE car came to rest; the portal opened; Yolara leaped out lightly, beckoned and flitted up the corridor. She paused before an ebon screen. At a touch it vanished, revealing an entrance to a small blue chamber, glowing as though cut from the heart of some gigantic sapphire; bare, save that in its centre, upon a low pedestal, stood a great globe fashioned from milky rock-crystal; upon its surface were faint tracings as of seas and continents, but, if so, either of some other world or of this world in immemorial past, for in no way did they resemble the mapped coast lines of our earth.

Poised upon the globe, rising from it out into space, locked in each other's arms, lips to lips, were two figures, a woman and a man, so exquisite, so lifelike, that for the moment I failed to realize that they, too, were carved of the crystal. And before this shrine—for nothing else could it be, I knew—three slender cones raised themselves: one of purest white flame, one of opalescent water, and the third of—moonlight! There was no mistaking them, the height of a tall man each stood—but how water, flame, and light were held so evenly, so steadily in their spire-shapes, I could not tell.

Yolara bowed lowly—once, twice, thrice. She turned to O'Keefe, nor by slightest look or gesture betrayed she knew others than he were there. The blue eyes wide, searching, unfathomable, she drew close, put white hands on his shoulders, looked down into his very soul.

"My lord," she murmured. "Now listen well for I, Yolara, give you three things—myself, and the Shining One, and the power that is the Shining One's—yea, and still a fourth thing that is all three—power over all upon that world from whence you came! These, my lord, ye shall have. I swear it"—she turned toward the altar—uplifted her arms—"by Siya and by Siyana, and by the flame, by the water, and by the light!"[1]

Her eyes grew purple dark.

"Let none dare to take you from me! Nor ye go from me unbidden!" she whispered fiercely.

Then swiftly, still ignoring us, she threw her arms about O'Keefe, pressed her white body to his breast, lips raised, eyes closed, seeking his. O'Keefe's arms tightened around her, his head dropped, lips seeking, finding hers—passionately! From Olaf came a deep indrawn breath that was almost a groan. But not in my heart could I find blame for the Irishman!

The priestess opened eyes now all misty blue, thrust him back, stood regarding him. O'Keefe, dead-white, raised a trembling hand to his face.

"And thus have I sealed my oath, O my lord!" she whispered. For the first time she seemed to recognize our presence, stared at us a moment, then through us, and turned to O'Keefe.

"Go, now!" she said. "Soon Rador shall come for you. Then—well, after that let happen what will!"

She smiled once more at him—so sweetly; turned toward the figures upon the great globe; sank upon her knees before them. Quietly we crept away, still silent, made our way to the little pavilion. But as we passed we heard a tumult from the green roadway; shouts of men, now and

[1] I have no space here even to outline the eschatology of this people, nor to catalogue their pantheon. Siya and Siyana typified worldly love. Their ritual was, however, singularly free from those degrading elements usually found in love-cults. Priests and priestesses of all cults dwelt in the immense seven-terraced structure, of which the jet amphitheatre was the water side. The symbol, icon, representation, of Siya and Siyana—the globe and the up-striving figures—typified earthly love, feet bound to earth, but eyes among the stars. Hell or heaven I never heard formulated, nor their equivalents; unless that existence in the Shining One's domain could serve for either. Over all this was Thanaroa, remote, unheeding, but still maker and ruler of all—an absentee First Cause personified! Thanaroa seemed to be the one article of belief in the creed of the soldiers—Rador, with his reverence for the Ancient Ones, was an exception. Whatever there was, indeed, of high, truly religious impulse among the Murians, this High God possessed. I found this exceedingly interesting, because it had long been my theory—to put the matter in the shape of a geometrical formula—that the real attractiveness of gods to man increases uniformly according to the square of their distance.—W. T. G.

then a woman's scream. Through a rift in the garden I glimpsed a jostling crowd on one of the bridges: green dwarfs struggling with the *ladala*—and all about droned a humming as of a giant hive disturbed!

Larry threw himself down upon one of the divans, covered his face with his hands, dropped them to catch troubled reproach in Olaf's eyes, and looked at me.

"*I* couldn't help it," he said, half defiantly—half-miserably. "God, what a woman. I *couldn't* help it!"

"Larry," I asked. "Why didn't you tell her you didn't love her—then?"

He gazed at me—the old twinkle back in his eye.

"Spoken like a scientist, Doc!" he exclaimed. "I suppose if a burning angel struck you out of nowhere and threw itself about you, you would most dignifiedly tell it you didn't want to be burned. For God's sake, don't talk nonsense, Goodwin!" he ended, almost peevishly.

"Evil! Evil!" The Norseman's voice was deep, nearly a chant. "All here is of evil: Trolldom and Helvede it is, *Ja!* And that she *djaevelsk* of beauty—what is she but harlot of that shining devil they worship. I, Olaf Huldricksson, know what she meant when she held out to you power over all the world, *Ja!*—as if the world had not devils enough in it now!"

"What?" The cry came from both O'Keefe and myself at once.

Olaf made a gesture of caution, relapsed into sullen silence. There were footsteps on the path, and into sight came Rador—but a Rador changed. Gone was every vestige of his mockery; curiously solemn, he saluted O'Keefe and Olaf with that salute which, before this, I had seen given only to Yolara and to Lugur. There came a swift quickening of the tumult—died away. He shrugged mighty shoulders.

"The *ladala* are awake!" he said. "So much for what two brave men can do!" He paused thoughtfully. "Bones and dust jostle not each other for place against the grave wall!" he added oddly. "But if bones and dust have revealed to them that they still—live——"

He stopped abruptly, eyes seeking the globe that bore and sent forth speech.[1]

"The *Afyo Maie* has sent me to watch over you till she summons you," he announced clearly. "There is to be a—feast. You, *Larree*, you, Goodwin are to come. I remain here with—Olaf."

"No harm to him!" broke in O'Keefe sharply. Rador touched his heart, his eyes.

"By the Ancient Ones, and by my love for you, and by what you twain did before the Shining One—I swear it!" he whispered.

Rador clapped palms; a soldier came round the path, in his grip a long flat box of polished wood. The green dwarf took it, dismissed him, threw open the lid.

"Here is your apparel for the feast, *Larree*," he said, pointing to the contents.

O'Keefe stared, reached down and drew out a white, shimmering, softly metallic, long-sleeved tunic, a broad, silvery girdle, leg swathings of the same argent material, and sandals that seemed to be cut out from silver. He made a quick gesture of angry dissent.

"Nay, *Larree!*" muttered the dwarf. "Wear them—I counsel it—I pray it—ask me not why," he went on swiftly, looking again at the globe.

O'Keefe, as I, was impressed by his earnestness. The dwarf made a curiously expressive pleading gesture. O'Keefe abruptly took the garments; passed into the room of the fountain.

"The Shining One dances not again?" I asked.

"No," he said. "No"—he hesitated—"it is the usual feast that follows the—sacrament! Lugur—and Double Tongue, who came with you, will be there," he added slowly.

"Lugur—" I gasped in astonishment. "After what happened—he will be there?"

"Perhaps, because of what happened, Goodwin, my friend," he answered—his eyes again full of malice; "and there will be others—friends of Yolara—friends of Lugur—and perhaps another"—his voice was almost inaudible—"one whom they have not called—" He halted, half-fearfully, glancing at the globe; put finger to lips and spread himself out upon one of the couches.

"Strike up the band"—came O'Keefe's voice—"here comes the hero!"

He strode into the room. I am bound to say that the admiration in Rador's eyes was reflected in my own, and even, if involuntarily, in Olaf's.

"A son of Siyana!" whispered Rador.

He knelt, took from his girdle-pouch a silk-wrapped something, unwound it—and, still kneeling, drew out a slender poniard of gleaming white metal, hilted with the blue stones; he thrust it into O'Keefe's girdle; then gave him again the rare salute.

"Come," he ordered and took us to the head of the pathway.

"Now," he said grimly, "let the Silent Ones show their power—if they still have it!"

And with this strange benediction, he turned back.

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[1] I find that I have neglected to explain the working of these interesting mechanisms that were telephonic, dictaphonic, telegraphic in one. I must assume that my readers are familiar with the receiving apparatus of wireless telegraphy, which must be "tuned" by the operator until its own vibratory quality is in exact harmony with the vibrations—the extremely rapid impacts—of those short electric wave-lengths we call Hertzian, and which carry the wireless messages. I must assume also that they are familiar with the elementary fact of physics that the vibrations of light and sound are interchangeable. The hearing-talking globes utilize both these principles, and with consummate simplicity. The light with which they shone was produced by an atomic "motor" within their base similar to that which activated the merely illuminating globes. The composition of the phonic spheres gave their surfaces an acute sensitivity and resonance. In conjunction with its energizing power, the metal set up what is called a "field of force," which linked it with every particle of its kind no matter how distant. When vibrations of speech impinged upon the resonant surface its rhythmic light-vibrations were broken, just as a telephone transmitter breaks an electric current. Simultaneously these light-vibrations were changed into sound—on the surfaces of all spheres tuned to that particular instrument. The "crawling" colors which showed themselves at these times were literally the voice of the speaker in its spectrum equivalent. While usually the sounds produced required considerable familiarity with the apparatus, to be understood quickly, they could, on occasion, be made startlingly loud and clear—as I was soon to realize.—W. T. G.

"For God's sake, Larry," I urged as we approached the house of the priestess, "you'll be careful!"

He nodded—but I saw with a little deadly pang of apprehension in my heart a puzzled, lurking doubt within his eyes.

As we ascended the serpent steps von Hetzdorp appeared. He gave a signal to our guards—and I wondered what influence the German had attained, for promptly, without question, they drew aside. At me he smiled amiably.

"Have you found your friends yet?" he went on—and now I sensed something deeply sinister in him. "No! It is too bad! Well, don't give up hope." He turned to O'Keefe.

"Lieutenant, I would like to speak to you—alone!"

"I've no secrets from Goodwin," answered O'Keefe.

"So?" queried von Hetzdorp suavely. He bent, whispered to Larry.

The Irishman started, eyed him with a certain shocked incredulity, then turned to me.

"Just a minute Doc!" he said, and I caught the suspicion of a wink. They drew aside, out of earshot. The German talked rapidly. Larry was all attention. Von Hetzdorp's earnestness became intense; O'Keefe interrupted—appeared to question. Von Hetzdorp glanced at me and as his gaze shifted from O'Keefe, I saw a flame of rage and horror blaze up in the latter's eyes. At last the Irishman appeared to consider gravely; nodded as though he had arrived at some decision, and von Hetzdorp thrust his hand to him.

And only I could have noticed Larry's shrinking, his microscopic hesitation before he took it, and his involuntary movement, as though to shake off something unclean, when the clasp had ended.

Von Hetzdorp, without another look at me, turned and went quickly within. The guards took their places. I looked at Larry inquiringly.

"Don't ask a thing now, Doc!" he said tensely. "Wait till we get home. But we've got to get damned busy and quick—I'll tell you that now——"

CHAPTER XX

The Tempting of Larry

WE paused before thick curtains, through which came the faint murmur of many voices. They parted; out came two—ushers, I suppose, they were—in cuirasses and kilts that reminded me somewhat of chain-mail—the first armor of any kind here that I had seen. They held open the folds.

The chamber, on whose threshold we stood, was far larger than either anteroom or hall of audience. Not less than three hundred feet long and half that in depth, from end to end of it ran two huge semi-elliptical tables, paralleling each other, divided by a wide aisle, and heaped with flowers, with fruits, with viands unknown to me, and glittering with crystal flagons, beakers, goblets of as many hues as the blooms. On the gay-cushioned couches that flanked the tables, lounging luxuriously, were scores of the fair-haired ruling class and there rose a little buzz of admiration, oddly mixed with a half-startled amaze, as their gaze fell upon O'Keefe in all his silvery magnificence. Everywhere the light-giving globes sent their roseate radiance.

The cuirassed dwarfs led us through the aisle. Within the arc of the inner half-circle was another glittering board, an oval. But of those seated there, facing us—I had eyes for only one—Yolara! She swayed up to greet O'Keefe—and she was like one of those white lily maids, whose beauty Hoang-Ku, the sage, says made the Gobi first a paradise, and whose lusts later made it the burned-out desert that it is. She held out hands to Larry, and on her face was passion—unashamed, unhiding.

She was Circe—but Circe conquered. Webs of filmiest white clung to the rose-leaf body. Twisted through the corn-silk hair a threaded circlet of pale sapphires shone; but they were pale beside Yolara's eyes. O'Keefe bent, kissed her hands, something more than mere admiration flaming from him. She saw—and, smiling, drew him down beside her.

It came to me that of all, only these two, Yolara and O'Keefe, were in white—and I wondered; then with a tightening of nerves ceased to wonder as there entered—Lugur! He was all in scarlet, and as he strode forward a silence fell—a tense, strained silence.

His gaze turned upon Yolara, rested upon O'Keefe, and instantly his face grew—dreadful—there is no other word than that for it. Von Hetzdorp leaned forward from the centre of the table, near whose end I sat, touched and whispered to him swiftly. With appalling effort the red dwarf controlled himself; he saluted the priestess ironically, I thought; took his place at the further end of the oval. And now I noted that the figures between were the seven of that Council of which the Shining One's priestess and Voice were the heads. The tension relaxed, but did not pass—as though a storm-cloud should turn away, but still lurk, threatening.

MY gaze ran back. This end of the room was draped with the exquisitely colored, graceful curtains looped with gorgeous garlands. Between curtains and table, where sat Larry and the nine, a circular platform, perhaps ten yards in diameter, raised itself a few feet above the floor, its gleaming surface half-covered with the luminous petals, fragrant, delicate.

On each side, below it, were low carven stools. The curtains parted and girls softly entered bearing their flutes, their harps, the curiously emotion-exciting, octaved drums. They sank into their places. They touched their instruments; a faint, languorous measure throbbed through the rosy air.

The stage was set! What was to be the play?

Now about the tables passed other dusky-haired maids, fair bosoms bare, their scanty kirtles looped high, pouring out the wines for the feasters.

My eyes sought O'Keefe. Whatever it had been that von Hetzdorp had said, clearly it now filled his mind—even to the exclusion of the wondrous woman beside him. His eyes were stern, cold—and now and then, as he turned them toward the German, filled with a curious speculation. Yolara

watched him, frowned, gave a low order to the Hebe behind her.

The girl disappeared, entered again with a ewer that seemed cut of amber. The priestess poured from it into Larry's glass a clear liquid that shook with tiny sparkles of light. She raised the glass to her lips, handed it to him. Half-smiling, half-abstractedly, he took it, touched his own lips where hers had kissed; drained it. A nod from Yolara and the maid refilled his goblet.

At once there was a swift transformation in the Irishman. His abstraction vanished; the sternness fled; his eyes sparkled. He leaned caressingly toward Yolara; whispered. Her blue eyes flashed triumphantly; her chiming laughter rang. She raised her own glass—but within it was not that clear drink that filled Larry's! And again he drained his own; and, lifting it, full once more, caught the baleful eyes of Lugur, and held it toward him mockingly. Yolara swayed close—alluring, tempting. He arose, face all reckless gaiety, rollicking deviltry.

"A toast!" he cried in English, "to the Shining One—and may the hell where it belongs soon claim it!"

He had used their own word for their god—all else had been in his own tongue, and so, fortunately, they did not understand. But the contempt in his action they did recognize—and a dead, fearful silence fell upon them all. Lugur's eyes blazed, little sparks of crimson in their green. The Priestess reached up, caught at O'Keefe. He seized the soft hand; caressed it; his gaze grew far away, sombre.

"The Shining One." He spoke low. "An' now again I see the faces of those who dance with it. It is the Fires of Mora—come, God alone knows how—from Erin—to this place. The Fires of Mora!" He contemplated the hushed folk before him; and then from his lips came that weirdest, most haunting of the lyric legends of Erin—the Curse of Mora:

"The fretted fires of Mora blew o'er him in the night;
He thrills no more to loving, nor weeps for past delight.
For when those flames have bitten, both grief and joy take flight—"

Again Yolara tried to draw him down beside her; and once more he gripped her hand. His eyes grew fixed—he crooned:

"And through the sleeping silence his feet must track the tune,
When the world is barred and speckled with silver of the moon—"

He stood, swaying, for a moment, and then, laughing, let the priestess have her way; drained again the glass.

And now my heart was cold, indeed—for what hope was there left with Larry mad, wild drunk!

The silence was unbroken—elfin women and dwarfs glancing furtively at each other. But now Yolara arose, face set, eyes flashing grey.

"Hear you, the Council, and you, Lugur—and all who are here!" she cried. "Now I, the priestess of the Shining One, take, as is my right, my mate. And this is he!" She pointed down upon Larry. He glanced up at her.

"Can't quite make out what you say, Yolara," he muttered thickly. "But say anything—you like—I love your voice!"

I turned sick with dread. Yolara's hand stole softly upon the Irishman's curls caressingly.

"You know the law, Yolara." Lugur's voice was flat, deadly. "You may not mate with other than your own kind. And this man is a stranger—a barbarian—food for the Shining One!" Literally, he spat the phrase.

"No, not of our kind—Lugur—higher!" Yolara answered serenely. "Lo, a son of Siya and of Siyana!"

"A lie!" roared the red dwarf. "A lie!"

"The Shining One revealed it to me!" said Yolara sweetly. "And if ye believe not, Lugur—go ask of the Shining One if it be not truth!"

THERE was bitter, nameless menace in those last words—and whatever their hidden message to Lugur, it was potent. He stood, choking, face hell-shadowed—von Hetzdorp leaned out again, whispered. The red dwarf bowed, now wholly ironically; resumed his place and his silence. And again I wondered, icy-hearted, what was the power the German had so to sway Lugur.

"What says the Council?" Yolara demanded, turning to them.

Only for a moment they consulted among themselves. Then the woman, whose face was a ravaged shrine of beauty, spoke.

"The will of the priestess is the will of the Council!" she answered.

Defiance died from Yolara's face; she looked down at Larry tenderly. He sat swaying, crooning.

"Bid the priests come," she commanded, then turned to the silent room. "By the rites of Siya and Siyana, Yolara takes their son for her mate!" And again her hand stole down possessingly, serpent soft, to the drunken head of the O'Keefe.

The curtains parted widely. Through them filed, two by two, twelve hooded figures clad in flowing robes of the green we see in forest vistas of opening buds of dawning spring. Of each pair one bore clasped to breast a globe of that milky crystal in the sapphire shrine-room; the other a harp, small, shaped somewhat like the ancient clarsach of the Druids.

Two by two they stepped upon the raised platform, placed gently upon it each their globe; and two by two crouched behind them. They formed now a star of six points about the petalled dais, and, simultaneously, they drew from their faces the covering cowls.

I half rose—youth and maidens these of the fair-haired; and youths and maids more beautiful than any of those I had yet seen—for upon their faces was little of that disturbing mockery to which I have been forced so often, because of the deep impression it made upon me, to refer. The ashen-gold of the maiden priestesses' hair was wound about their brows in shining coronals. The pale locks

of the youths were clustered within circlets of translucent, glimmering gems like moon-stones. And then, crystal globe alternately before and harp alternately held by youth and maid, they began to sing.

What was that song, I do not know—nor ever shall. Archaic, ancient beyond thought, it seemed—not with the ancientness of things that for uncounted ages have been but wind-driven dust. Rather was it the ancientness of the golden youth of the world, love lilts of earth younglings, with light of new born suns drenching them, chorals of young stars mating in space; murmurings of April gods and goddesses. A languor stole through me. The rosy lights upon the tripods began to die away, and as they faded the milky globes gleamed forth brighter, ever brighter. Yolara rose, stretched a hand to Larry, led him through the sextuple groups, and stood face to face with him in the centre of their circle.

The rose-light died; all that immense chamber was black, save for the circle of glowing spheres. Within this their milky radiance grew brighter—brighter. The song whispered away. A throbbing arpeggio dripped from the harps, and as the notes pulsed out, up from the globes, as though striving to follow, pulsed with them tips of moon-fire cones, such as I had seen before Yolara's altar. Weirdly, caressingly, compellingly the harp notes throbbed in repeated, re-repeated theme, holding within itself the same archaic golden quality I had noted in the singing. And over the moon flame pinnacles rose higher!

Yolara lifted her arms; within her hands were clasped O'Keefe's. She raised them above their two heads and slowly, slowly drew him with her into a circling, graceful step, tendrillings delicate as the slow spirallings of twilight mist upon some still stream.

As they swayed the rippling arpeggios grew louder, and suddenly the slender pinnacles of moon fire bent, dipped, flowed to the floor, crept in a shining ring around those two—and began to rise, a gleaming, glimmering, enchanted barrier—rising, ever rising—hiding them!

With one swift movement Yolara unbound her circlet of pale sapphires, shook loose the waves of her silken hair. It fell, a rippling, wondrous cascade, veiling both her and O'Keefe to their girdles—and now the shining coils of moon fire had crept to their knees—circling higher—higher.

And ever despair grew deeper in my soul!

What was that! I started to my feet, and all around me in the blackness I heard startled motion. From without came a blaring of trumpets, the sound of running men, loud murmurings. The tumult drew closer. I heard cries of "Lakla! Lakla!" Now it was at the very threshold and within it, oddly, as though punctuating the clamor, a deep-toned, almost abyssmal, booming sound thunderously bass and reverberant.

Abruptly the harpings ceased; the moon fires shuddered, fell, and began to sweep back into the crystal globes; Yolara's swaying form grew rigid, every atom of it listening. She threw aside the veiling cloud of hair, and in the gleam of the last retreating spirals her face glared out like some old Greek mask of tragedy.

The sweet lips that even at their sweetest could never lose their delicate cruelty, had no sweetness now. They were drawn into a square—inhuman as that of the Medusa; in her eyes were the fires of the pit, and her hair seemed to writhe like the serpent locks of that Gorgon whose mouth she had borrowed; all her beauty was transformed into a nameless thing—hideous, inhuman, blasting! If this was the true soul of Yolara springing to her face, then, I thought, God help us in very deed!

I wrested my gaze away to O'Keefe. All drunkenness gone, himself again, he was staring down at her, and in his eyes were loathing and horror unutterable. So they stood—and the light fled.

ONLY for a moment did the darkness hold. With lightning swiftness the blackness that was the chamber's other wall vanished. Through a portal open between grey screens, the silver sparkling radiance poured.

And through the portal marched, two by two, incredible, nightmare figures—frog-men, giants, taller by nearly a yard than even tall O'Keefe! Their enormous saucer eyes were irised by wide bands of green-flecked red, in which the phosphorescence flickered. Their long muzzles, lips half-open in monstrous grin, held rows of glistening, slender, lancet sharp fangs. Over the glaring eyes arose a horny helmet, a carapace of black and orange scales, studded with foot-long lance-headed horns.

They lined themselves like soldiers on each side of the wide table aisle, and now I could see that their horny armor covered shoulders and backs, ran across the chest in knobbed cuirass, and at wrists and heels jutted out into curved, murderous spurs. The webbed hands and feet ended in yellow, spade-shaped claws.

They carried spears ten feet, at least, in length, the heads of which were pointed cones, glistening with that same covering, from whose touch of swift decay I had so narrowly saved Rador.

They were grotesque, yes—more grotesque than anything I had ever seen or dreamed, and they were—terrible!

And then, quietly, through their ranks came—a girl! Behind her, enormous pouch at his throat swelling in and out menacingly, in one paw a tree-like, spike-studded mace, a frog-man, huger than any of the others, guarding. But of him I caught but a fleeting, involuntary impression—all my gaze was for her.

For it was she who had pointed out to us the way from the peril of the Dweller's lair on Nan-Tauach. And as I looked at her, I marvelled that ever could I have thought the priestess more beautiful. Into the eyes of O'Keefe rushed joy and an utter abasement of shame.

And from all about came murmurs—edged with anger, half-incredulous, tinged with fear:

"Lakla!"

"Lakla!"

"The handmaiden!"

She halted close beside me. From firm little chin to dainty buskined feet she was swathed in soft

robes of dull, almost coppery hue. The left arm was hidden, the right free and gloved. Wound tight about it was one of the vines of the sculptured wall and of Lugur's circled signet-ring. Thick, a vivid green, its tendrils ran between her fingers, stretching out four flowered heads that gleamed like blossoms cut from gigantic, glowing rubies.

So she stood contemplating Yolara. Then drawn perhaps by my gaze, she dropped her eyes upon me; golden, translucent, with tiny flecks of amber in their aureate irises, the soul that looked through them was as far removed from that flaming out of the priestess's as zenith above nadir.

I noted the low, broad brow, the proud little nose, the tender mouth, and the soft—sunlight—glow that seemed to transfuse the delicate skin. And suddenly in the eyes dawned a smile—sweet, friendly, a touch of roguishness, profoundly reassuring in its all humanness. I felt my heart expand as though freed from fetters, a recrudescence of confidence in the essential reality of things—as though in nightmare the struggling consciousness should glimpse some familiar face and know that the terrors with which it strove were dreams. And involuntarily I smiled back at her.

SHE raised her head and looked again at Yolara, contempt and a certain curiosity in her gaze; at O'Keefe—and through the softened eyes drifted swiftly a shadow of sorrow, and on its fleeting wings deepest interest, and hovering over that a naïve approval as reassuringly human as had been her smile.

She spoke, and her voice, deep-timbred, liquid gold as was Yolara's all silver, was subtly the synthesis of all the golden glowing beauty of her.

"The Silent Ones have sent me, O Yolara," she said. "And this is their command to you—that you deliver to me to bring before them three of the four strangers who have found their way here. For him there who plots with Lugur"—she pointed at von Hetzdorp, and I saw Yolara start—"they have no need. Into his heart the Silent Ones have looked; and Lugur and you may keep him, Yolara!"

There was honeyed venom in the last words.

Yolara was herself now; only the edge of shrillness on her voice revealed her wrath as she answered.

"And whence have the Silent Ones gained power to command, *choya?*"

This last, I knew, was a very vulgar word; I had heard Rador use it in a moment of anger to one of the serving maids, and it meant, approximately, "kitchen girl," "scullion." Beneath the insult and the acid disdain, the blood rushed up under Lakla's ambered ivory skin.

"Yolara"—her voice was low—"of no use is it to question me. I am but the messenger of the Silent Ones. And one thing only am I bidden to ask you—do you deliver to me the three strangers?"

Lugur was on his feet; eagerness, sardonic delight, sinister anticipation thrilling from him—and my same glance showed von Hetzdorp, crouched, biting his finger-nails, glaring at the Golden Girl.

"No!" Yolara spat the word. "No! Now by Thanaroa and by the Shining One, no!" Her eyes blazed, her nostrils were wide, in her fair throat a little pulse beat angrily. "You, Lakla—take you *my* message to the Silent Ones. Say to them that I keep this man"—she pointed to Larry—"because he is mine. Say to them that I keep the yellow-haired one and him"—she pointed to me—"because it pleases me.

"Tell them that upon their mouths I place my foot, so!"—she stamped upon the dais viciously—"and that in their faces I spit!"—and her action was hideously snakelike. "And say last to them, you handmaiden, that if *you* they dare send to Yolara again, she will feed *you* to the Shining One! Now—go!"

The handmaiden's face was white.

"Not unforeseen by the three was this, Yolara," she replied. "And did you speak as you have spoken, then was I bidden to say this to you." Her voice deepened. "Three *tal* have you to take counsel, Yolara. And at the end of that time these things must you have determined—either to do or not to do: first, send the strangers to the Silent Ones; second, give up, you and Lugur and all of you, that dream you have of conquest of the world without; and, third, foreswear the Shining One! And if you do not one and all these things, then are you done, your cup of life broken, your wine of life spilled. Yea, Yolara, for you and the Shining One, Lugur and the Nine and all those here and their kind shall pass! This say the Silent Ones, 'Surely shall all of ye pass and be as though never had ye been.'"

Now a gasp of rage and fear arose from all those around me—but the priestess threw back her head and laughed loud and long. Into the silver sweet chiming of her laughter clashed that of Lugur—and after a little the nobles took it up, till the whole chamber echoed with their mirth. O'Keefe, lips tightening, moved toward the handmaiden, and almost imperceptibly, but peremptorily, she waved him back.

"Those *are* great words—great words indeed, *choya,*" shrilled Yolara at last and again Lakla winced beneath the word. "Lo, for *laya* upon *laya,* the Shining One has been freed from the Three; and for *laya* upon *laya* they have sat helpless, rotting. Now I ask you again—whence comes their power to lay their will upon me, and whence comes their strength to wrestle with the Shining One and the beloved of the Shining One?"

And again she laughed—and again Lugur and all the fair-haired joined in her laughter.

Into the eyes of Lakla I saw creep a doubt, a wavering; as though deep within her the foundations of her own belief were none too firm.

SHE hesitated, turning upon O'Keefe gaze in which rested more than suggestion of appeal! And Yolara saw, too, for she flushed with triumph, stretched a finger toward the handmaiden.

"Look!" she cried. "Look! Why, even *she* does not believe!" Her voice grew silk of silver—merciless, cruel. "Now am I minded to send another answer to the Silent Ones. Yea! But not by *you,* Lakla; by these"—she pointed to the frog-

men, and, swift as light, her hand darted into her bosom, bringing forth the little shining cone of death.

But before she could level it the Golden Girl had released that hidden left arm and thrown over her face a fold of the metallic swathings. Swifter than Yolara, she raised the arm that held the vine—and now I knew this was no inert blossoming thing.

It was alive!

It writhed down her arm, and its four rubescent flower heads thrust out toward the priestess—vibrating, quivering, held in leash only by the light touch of the handmaiden at its very end.

From the swelling throat pouch of the monster behind her came a succession of the reverberant boomings. The frog-men wheeled, raised their lances, leveled them at the throng. Around the reaching ruby flowers a faint red mist swiftly grew.

The silver cone dropped from Yolara's rigid fingers; her eyes grew stark with horror; all her unearthly loveliness fled from her; she stood pale-lipped. The handmaiden dropped the protecting veil—and now it was she who laughed.

"It would seem, then, Yolara, that there *is* a thing of the Silent Ones ye fear!" she said. "Well—the kiss of the *Yekta* I promise you in return for the embrace of your Shining One."

She looked at Larry, long, searchingly, and suddenly again with all that effect of sunlight bursting into dark places, her smile shone upon him. She nodded, half gaily; looked down upon me, the little merry light dancing in her eyes; waved her hand to me.

She spoke to the giant frog-man. He wheeled behind her as she turned, facing the priestess, club upraised, fangs glistening. His troop moved not a jot, spears held high. Lakla began to pass slowly—almost, I thought, tauntingly—and as she reached the portal Larry leaped from the dais.

"*Alanna!*" he cried. "You'll not be leavin' me just when I've found you!"

In his excitement he spoke in his own tongue, the velvet brogue appealing. Lakla turned, contemplated O'Keefe, hesitant, unquestionably longingly, irresistibly like a child making up her mind whether she dared or dared not take a delectable something offered her.

"I go with you," said O'Keefe, this time in her own speech. "Come on, Doc!" He reached out a hand to me.

But now Yolara spoke. Life and beauty had flowed back into her face, and in the purple eyes all her hosts of devils were gathered.

"Do you forget what I promised you before Siya and Siyana. And do you think that you can leave me—*me*—as though I were a *choya*—like *her*." She pointed to Lakla. "Do you——"

"Now, listen, Yolara," Larry interrupted almost plaintively. "No promise has passed from me to you—and why would you hold me?" He passed unconsciously into English. "Be a good sport, Yolara," he urged. "You *have* got a very devil of a temper, you know, and so have I and we'd be really awfully uncomfortable together. And why don't you get rid of that devilish pet of yours, and be good!"

She looked at him, puzzled. Von Hetzdorp leaned over, translated to Lugur. The red dwarf smiled maliciously, drew near the priestess; whispered to her what was without doubt as near as he could come in the Murian to Larry's own very colloquial phrases.

Yolara's lips writhed.

"Hear me, Lakla!" she cried. "Now would I not let you take this man from me were I to dwell ten thousand *laya* in the agony of *Yekta's* kiss. This I swear to you—by Thanaroa, by my heart, and by my strength—and may my strength wither, my heart rot in my breast, and Thanaroa forget me if I do!"

"Listen, Yolara—" began O'Keefe again.

"Be silent, you!" It was almost a shriek. And her hand again sought in her breast for the cone of rhythmic death.

Lugur touched her arm, whispered again. The glint of guile shone in her eyes; she laughed softly, relaxed.

"The Silent Ones, Lakla, bade you say that they—allowed—me three *tal* to decide," she said suavely. "Go now in peace, Lakla, and say that Yolara has heard, and that for three *tal* they—allow—her she will take council."

The handmaiden hesitated.

"The Silent Ones have said it," she answered at last. "Stay you here, strangers"—the long lashes drooped as her eyes met O'Keefe's and a hint of blush was in her cheeks—"stay you here, strangers, till then. But, Yolara, see you on that heart and strength you have sworn by that they come to no harm—else that which you have invoked shall come upon you swiftly indeed—and that *I* promise you," she added.

Their eyes met, clashed, burned into each other—black flame from Abaddon and golden flame from Paradise.

"Remember!" said Lakla, and passed through the portal. The gigantic frog-man boomed a thunderous note of command, his grotesque guards turned and slowly followed their mistress; and last of all passed out the monster with the mace.

CHAPTER XXI

Larry's Defiance

A CLAMOR arose from all the chamber; stilled in an instant by a motion of Yolara's hand. She stood silent, regarding O'Keefe with something other now than blind wrath; something half regretful, half beseeching. But the Irishman's control was gone.

"Yolara"—his voice shook with rage, and he threw caution to the wind—"now hear *me*. I go where I will and when I will. Here shall we stay until the time she named is come. And then we follow her, whether you will or not. And if any should have thought to stop us—tell them of that flame that shattered the vase," he added grimly.

The wistfulness died out of her eyes, leaving them cold. But no answer made she to him.

"What Lakla has said, the Council must consider, and at once." The priestess was facing the nobles. "Now, friends of mine, and friends of Lugur, must all feud, all rancor, between us end." She glanced swiftly at Lugur. "The *ladala* are

stirring, and the Silent Ones threaten. Yet fear not—for are we not strong under the Shining One? And now—leave us."

Her hand dropped to the table, and she gave, evidently, a signal, for in marched a dozen or more of the green dwarfs.

"Take these two to their place," she commanded, pointing to us.

The green dwarfs clustered about us. Without another look at the priestess O'Keefe marched beside me, between them, from the chamber. And it was not until we had reached the pillared entrance that Larry spoke.

"I hated to talk like that to a woman, Doc," he said, "and a pretty woman, at that. But first she played me with a marked deck, and then not only pinched all the chips, but drew a gun on me. What the hell!—she nearly had me—*married*—to her. I don't know what the stuff was she gave me; but, take it from me, if I had the recipe for that brew I could sell it for a thousand dollars a jolt at Forty-Second and Broadway.

"One jigger of it, and you forget there is a trouble in the world: three of them, and you forget there is a world. No excuse for it, Doc; and I don't care what you say or what Lakla may say—it wasn't my fault, and I don't hold it up against myself for a damn."

"I must admit that I'm a bit uneasy about her threats," I said, ignoring all this. He stopped abruptly.

"What're you afraid of?"

"Mostly," I answered dryly, "I have no desire to dance with the Shining One!"

"Listen to me, Goodwin." He took up his walk impatiently. "I've all the love and admiration for you in the world but this place has got your nerve. Hereafter, one Larry O'Keefe, of Ireland and the little old U. S. A., leads this party. Nix on the tremolo stop, nix on the superstition! I'm the works. Get me?"

"Yes, I get you!" I exclaimed testily enough. "But to use your own phrase, kindly *can* the repeated references to superstition."

"Why should I?" He was almost wrathful. "You scientific people build up whole philosophies on the basis of things you never saw, and you scoff at people who believe in other things that you think *they* never saw and that don't come under what you label scientific. You talk about paradoxes—why, your scientist, who thinks he is the most skeptical, the most materialistic aggregation of atoms ever gathered at the exact mathematical centre of Missouri, has more blind faith than a dervish, and more credulity, more superstition, than a cross-eyed nigger beating it past a country graveyard in the dark of the moon!"

"Larry!" I cried, dazed.

"Olaf's no better," he said. "But I can make allowances for him. He's a sailor. No, sir. What this expedition needs is a man without superstition. And remember this. The leprechaun promised that I'd have full warning before anything happened. And if we do have to go out, we'll see that banshee bunch clean up before we do, and pass in a blaze of glory. And don't forget it. Hereafter—I'm—in charge!"

BY this time we were before our pavilion; and neither of us in a very amiable mood I'm afraid. Rador was awaiting us with a score of his men.

"Let none pass in here without authority—and let none pass out unless I accompany them," he ordered brusquely. "Summon one of the swiftest of the *coria* and have it wait in readiness," he added, as though by afterthought.

But when we had entered and the screens were drawn together his manner changed; all eagerness he questioned us. Briefly we told him of the happenings of the feast, of Lakla's dramatic interruption, and of what had followed.

"Three *tal*," he said musingly; three *tal* the Silent Ones have allowed—and Yolara agreed." He sank back, silent and thoughtful.[1]

"*Ja!*" It was Olaf. "*Ja!* I told you the Shining Devil's mistress was all evil. *Ja!* Now I begin again that tale I started when he came"—he glanced toward the preoccupied Rador. "And tell him not what I say should he ask. For I trust none here in Troldom, save the *Jomfrau*—the White Virgin!

"After the oldster was *adsprede*"—Olaf once more used that expressive Norwegian word for the dissolving of Songar—"I knew that it was a time for cunning. I said to myself, 'If they think I have no ears to hear, they will speak; and it may be I will find a way to save my Helma and Dr. Goodwin's friends, too.' *Ja*, and they did speak.

"The red *Trolde* asked the German how came it he was a worshipper of Thanaroa." I could not resist a swift glance of triumph toward O'Keefe. "And the German," rumbled Olaf, "said that all his people worshipped Thanaroa and had fought against the other nations that denied him.

"And then we had come to Lugur's palace. They put me in rooms, and there came to me men who rubbed and oiled me and loosened my muscles. The next day I wrestled with a great dwarf they called Valdor. He was a mighty man, and long we struggled, and at last I broke his back. And Lugur was pleased, so that I sat with him at feast and with the German, too. And again, not knowing that I understood them, they talked.

"The German had gone fast and far. They talked of Lugur as emperor of the Germans, and von Hetzdorp under him. They spoke of the green light that shook life from the oldster and Lugur said that the secret of it had been the Ancient Ones' and that the Council had not too much of it. But von Hetzdorp said that among his race were many wise men who could make more once they had studied it.

"And the next day I wrestled with a great dwarf named Tahola, mightier far than Valdor. Him I threw after a long, long time, and his back also I broke. Again Lugur was pleased. And again we sat at table, he and the German and I. This time they spoke of something these *Trolde* have which opens up a *Svaele*—abysses into which all in its range drops up into the sky!"

"What!" I exclaimed.

"I know about them," said Larry. "Wait!"

[1] A *tal* in Muria is the equivalent of thirty hours of earth surface time.—W. T. G.

"Lugur had drunk much," went on Olaf. "He was boastful. The German pressed him to show this thing. After a while the red one went out and came back with a little golden box. He and the German went into the garden. I followed them. There was a *lille Hoj*—a mound—of stones in that garden on which grew flowers and trees.

"Lugur pressed upon the box, and a spark no bigger than a sand grain leaped out and fell beside the stones. Lugur pressed again, and a blue light shot from the box and lighted on the spark. The spark that had been no bigger than a grain of sand grew and grew as the blue struck it. And then there was a sighing, a wind blew—and the stones and the flowers and the trees were not. They were *forsvinde*—vanished!

"Then Lugur, who had been laughing, grew quickly sober; for he thrust the German back—far back. And soon down into the garden came tumbling the stones and the trees, but broken and shattered, and falling as though from a great height. And Lugur said that of *this* something they had much, for its making was a secret handed down by their own forefathers and not by the Ancient Ones.

"They feared to use it, he said, for a spark thrice as large as that he had used would have sent all that garden falling upward and might have opened a way to the outside before—he said just this—*'before we are ready to go out into it!'*

"The German questioned much, but Lugur sent for more drink and grew merrier and threatened him, and the German was silent through fear. Thereafter I listened when I could, and little more I learned, but that little enough. *Ja!* Lugur is hot for conquest; so Yolara and so the Council. They tire of it here and the Silent Ones make their minds not too easy, no, even though they jeer at them! And this they plan—to rule our world with their Shining Devil."

The Norseman was silent for a moment; then voice deep, trembling——

"Troldom is awake; Helvede crouches at Earth Gate whining to be loosed into a world already devil ridden! And we are but three!"

I FELT the blood drive out of my heart. But Larry's was the fighting face of the O'Keefes of a thousand years. Rador glanced at him, arose, stepped through the curtains; returned swiftly with the Irishman's uniform.

"Put it on," he said, brusquely; again fell back into his silence and whatever O'Keefe had been about to say was submerged in his wild and joyful whoop. He ripped from him glittering tunic and leg swathings.

"Richard is himself again!" he shouted; and each garment as he donned it, fanned his old devil-may-care confidence to a higher flame. The last scrap of it on, he drew himself up before us.

"Bow down, ye divils!" he cried. 'Bang your heads on the floor and do homage to Larry the First, Emperor of Great Britain, Autocrat of all Ireland, Scotland, England, and Wales, and adjacent waters and islands! Kneel, ye scuts, kneel."

"Larry," I cried, "are you going crazy?"

"Not a bit of it," he said. "I'm that and more if Herr von Hetzdorp keeps his promise. Whoop! Bring forth the royal jewels an' put a whole new bunch of golden strings in Tara's harp an' down with the Sassenach forever! Whoop!"

He did a wild jig.

"Lord how good the old togs feels," he grinned. "The touch of 'em has gone to my head. But it's straight stuff I'm telling you about my empire."

He sobered.

"Not that it's not serious enough at that. A lot that Olaf's told us I've surmised from hints dropped by Yolara. But I got the full key to it from the Von himself when he stopped me just before—before"—he reddened—"well, before I acquired that brand-new brand of souse.

"Maybe he had a hint—maybe he just surmised that I knew a lot more than I did. And he thought Yolara and I were going to be loving little turtle doves. Also he figured that Yolara had a lot more influence with the Unholy Fireworks than Lugur. Also that being a woman she could be more easily handled. All this being so, what was the logical thing for the man to do? Sure, you get me, Steve! Throw down Lugur and make an alliance with me! So *he* calmly offered to ditch the red dwarf if *I* would deliver Yolara. My reward from Germany was to be said emperorship! Can you beat it? Good Lord!"

He went off into a perfect storm of laughter. But not to me in the light of what Germany has done and has proved herself capable of, did this thing seem at all absurd; rather in it I sensed the dawn of catastrophe colossal.

"And yet," he was quiet enough now, "I'm a bit scared. They've got the *Keth* ray and those gravity-destroying bombs——"

"Gravity-destroying bombs!" I gasped.

"Sure," he said. "The little fairy that sent the trees and stones kiting up from Lugur's garden. von Hetzdorp licked his lips over them. They cut off gravity, just about as the shadow screens cut off light—and consequently whatever's in their range just naturally goes shooting up to the moon—

"They get my goat, why deny it?" went on Larry. "With them and the *Keth* and gentle invisible soldiers walking around assassinating at will—well, the Bolsheviki are only puling babes, eh Doc?

"I don't mind the Shining One," said O'Keefe, "one splash of a downtown New York high-pressure fire hose would do for it! But the others—are the goods! Believe me!"

But for once O'Keefe's confidence found no echo within me. Not lightly, as he, did I hold that dread mystery, the Dweller—and a vision passed before me, a vision of an Apocalypse undreamed by the Evangelist.

A vision of the Shining One swirling into our world, a monstrous, glorious flaming pillar of incarnate, eternal Evil—of peoples passing through its radiant embrace into that hideous, unearthly life-in-death which I had seen enfold the sacrifices—of armies trembling into dancing atoms of diamond dust beneath the green ray's rhythmic death—of cities rushing out into space upon the wings of that other demoniac force which Olaf had watched at work—of a haunted world through which the assassins of the Dweller's court stole invisible, carrying with them every passion of hell—of the rallying

to the Thing of every sinister soul and of the weak and the unbalanced, mystics and carnivores of humanity alike; for well I knew that, once loosed, not even Germany could hold this devil-god for long and that swiftly its blight would spread!

And then a world that was all colossal reek of cruelty and terror; a welter of lusts, of hatreds and of torment; a chaos of horror in which the Dweller waxing ever stronger, the ghastly hordes of those it had consumed growing ever greater, wreaked its inhuman will!

At the last a ruined planet, a cosmic plague, spinning through the shuddering heavens; its verdant plains, its murmuring forests, its meadows and its mountains manned only by a countless crew of soulless, mindless dead-alive, their shells illumined with the Dweller's infernal glory—and flaming over this vampirized earth like a flare from some hell far, infinitely far, beyond the reach of man's farthest flung imagining—the Dweller!

RADOR jumped to his feet; walked to the whispering globe. He bent over its base; did something with its mechanism; beckoned to us. The globe span rapidly, faster than ever I had seen it before. A low humming arose, changed into a murmur, and then from it I heard Lugur's voice clearly.

"It is to be war then?"

There was a chorus of assent—from the Council, I thought.

"I will take the tall one named—*Larree.*" It was the priestess's voice. "After the three *tal,* you may have him, Lugur, to do with as you will."

"No!" it was Lugur's voice again, but with a rasp of anger. "All must die."

"He shall die," again Yolara. "But I would that first he see Lakla pass—and that she know what is to happen to him."

"No!" I started—for this was von Hetzdorp. "Now is no time, Yolara, for one's own desires. This is my Council. At the end of the three *tal* Lakla will come for our answer. Your men will be in ambush and they will slay her and her escort quickly with the *Keth.* But not till that is done must the three be slain—and then quickly. With Lakla dead we shall go forth to the Silent Ones—and I promise you that I will find the way to destroy them!"

"It is well!" It was Lugur.

"It *is* well, Yolara." It was a woman's voice, and I knew it for that old one of ravaged beauty. "Cast from your mind whatever is in it for this stranger—either of love or hatred. In this the Council is with Lugur and the man of wisdom."

There was a silence. Then came the priestess's voice, sullen but—beaten.

"It is well!"

"Let the three be taken now by Rador to the temple and given to the High Priest Sator"—thus Lugur—"until what we have planned comes to pass."

Rador gripped the base of the globe; abruptly it ceased its spinning. He turned to us as though to speak and even as he did so its bell note sounded peremptorily and on it the color films began to creep at their accustomed pace.

"I hear," the green dwarf whispered. "They shall be taken there at once." The globe grew silent. He stepped toward us.

"You have heard," he turned to us.

"Not on your life, Rador," said Larry. "Nothing doing!" And then in the Murian's own tongue. "We follow Lakla, Rador. And *you* lead the way." He thrust the pistol close to the green dwarf's side.

Rador did not move.

"Of what use, *Larree?*" he said, quietly. "Me you can slay—but in the end you will be taken. Life is not held so dear in Muria that my men out there or those others who can come quickly will let you by—even though you slay many. And in the end they will overpower you."

There was a trace of irresolution in O'Keefe's face.

"And," added Rador, "if I let you go I dance with the Shining One—or worse!"

O'Keefe's pistol hand dropped.

"You're a good sport, Rador, and far be it from me to get you in bad," he said. "Take us to the temple—when we get there—well, your responsibility ends, doesn't it?"

The green dwarf nodded; on his face a curious expression—was it relief? Or was it emotion higher than this?

He turned curtly.

"Follow," he said. We passed out of that gay little pavilion that had come to be home to us even in this alien place. The guards stood at attention.

"You, Sattoya, stand by the globe," he ordered one of them. "Should the *Afyo Maie* ask, say that I am on my way with the strangers even as she has commanded."

We passed through the lines to the *corial* standing like a great shell at the end of the runway leading into the green road.

"Wait you here," he said curtly to the driver. The green dwarf ascended to his seat, sought the lever and we swept on—on and out upon the glistening obsidian.

Then Rador faced us and laughed.

"*Larree,*" he cried, "I love you for that spirit of yours! And did you think that Rador would carry to the temple prison a man who would take the chances of torment upon his own shoulders to save him? Or you, Goodwin, who saved him from the rotting death? For what did I take the *corial* or lift the veil of silence that I might hear what threatened you——"

He swept the *corial* to the left, away from the temple approach.

"I am done with Lugur and with Yolara and the Shining One!" cried Rador. "My hand is for you three and for Lakla and those to whom she is handmaiden!"

The shell leaped forward; seemed to fly.

CHAPTER XXII

The Casting of the Shadow

NOW we were racing down toward that last span whose ancientness had set it apart from all the other soaring arches. The shell's speed slackened; we approached warily.

"We pass there?" asked O'Keefe.

The green dwarf nodded, pointing to the right

where the bridge ended in a broad platform held high upon two gigantic piers, between which ran a spur from the glistening road. Platform and bridge were swarming with men-at-arms; they crowded the parapets, looking down upon us curiously but with no evidence of hostility. Rador drew a deep breath of relief.

"We don't have to break our way through, then?" There was disappointment in the Irishman's voice.

"No use, *Larree!*" Smiling, Rador stopped the *corial* just beneath the arch and beside one of the piers. "Now, listen well. They have had no warning, hence does Yolara still think us on the way to the temple. This is the gateway of the Portal—and the gateway is closed by the Shadow. Once I commanded here and I know its laws. This must I do—by craft persuade Serku, the keeper of the gateway, to lift the Shadow; or raise it myself. And that will be hard and it may well be that in the struggle life will be stripped of us all. Yet is it better to die fighting than to dance with the Shining One!"

He swept the shell around the pier, opened a wide plaza paved with the volcanic glass, but black as that down which we had sped from the chamber of the Moon Pool. It shone like a mirrored lakelet of jet; on each side of it arose what at first glance seemed towering bulwarks of the same ebon obsidian; at second, revealed themselves as structures hewn and set in place by men; polished faces pierced by dozens of high, narrow windows.

Down each façade a stairway fell, broken by small landings on which a door opened; they dropped to a broad ledge of greyish stone edging the lip of this midnight pool and upon it also fell two wide flights from either side of the bridge platform. Along all four stairways the guards were ranged; and here and there against the ledge stood the shells—in a curiously comforting resemblance to parked motors in our own world.

The sombre walls bulked high; curved and ended in two obelisked pillars from which, like a tremendous curtain, stretched a barrier of that tenebrous gloom which, though weightless as shadow itself, I now knew to be as impenetrable as the veil between life and death. In this murk, unlike all others I had seen, I sensed movement, a quivering, a tremor constant and rhythmic; not to be seen, yet caught by some subtle sense; as though it beat a swift pulse of—black light.

The green dwarf turned the *corial* slowly to the edge at the right; crept cautiously on toward where, not more than a hundred feet from the barrier, a low, wide entrance opened in the fort. Guarding its threshold stood two guards, armed with broadswords, double-handed, terminating in a wide lunette mouthed with murderous fangs. These they raised in salute and through the portal strode a dwarf huge as Rador, dressed as he and carrying only the poniard that was the badge of office of Muria's captainry.

The green dwarf swept the shell expertly against the ledge; leaped out.

"Greeting, Serku!" he answered. "I was but looking for the *corial* of Lakla."

"Lakla!" exclaimed Serku. "Why, the handmaiden passed with her *Akka* nigh a *va* ago!"

"Passed!" The astonishment of the green dwarf was so real that half was I myself deceived. "You let her *pass?*"

"Certainly I let her pass—" But under the green dwarf's stern gaze the truculence of the guardian faded. "Why should I not?" he asked, apprehensively.

"Because Yolara commanded otherwise," answered Rador, coldly.

"There came no command to me." Little beads of sweat stood out on Serku's forehead.

"Serku," interrupted the green dwarf swiftly, "truly is my heart wrung for you. This is a matter of Yolara and of Lugur and the Council; yes, even of the Shining One! And the message was sent—and the fate, mayhap, of all Muria rested upon your obedience and the return of Lakla with these strangers to the Council. Now truly is my heart wrung, for there are few I would less like to see dance with the Shining One than you, Serku," he ended, softly.

Livid now was the gateway's guardian, his great frame shaking.

"Come with me and speak to Yolara," he pleaded. "There came no message—tell her——"

"Wait, Serku!" There was a thrill as of inspiration in Rador's voice. "This *corial* is of the swiftest—Lakla's are of the slowest. With Lakla scarce a *va* ahead we can reach her before she enters the Portal. Lift you the Shadow—we will bring her back, and this will I do for you, Serku."

Doubt tempered Serku's panic.

"Why not go alone, Rador, leaving the strangers here with me?" he asked—and I thought not unreasonably.

"Nay, then." The green dwarf was brusque. "Lakla will not return until I carry to her these men as evidence of our good faith. Come—we will speak to Yolara and she shall judge you—" He started away—but Serku caught his arm.

"No, Rador, no!" he whispered, again panic-stricken. "Go you—as you will. But bring her back! Speed, Rador!" He sprang toward the entrance. "I lift the Shadow——"

Into the green dwarf's poise crept a curious, almost a listening, alertness. He leaped to Serku's side.

"I go with you," I heard. "Some little I can tell you—" They were gone.

"Fine work!" muttered Larry. "Nominated for a citizen of Ireland when we get out of this, one Rador of——"

THE Shadow trembled—shuddered into nothingness; the obelisked outposts that had held it framed a ribbon of roadway, high banked with verdure, vanishing in green distances.

And then from the portal sped a shriek, a death cry! It cut through the silence of the ebon pit like a whimpering arrow. Before it had died, down the stairways came pouring the guards. Those at the threshold raised their swords and peered within. Abruptly Rador was between them. One dropped his hilt and gripped him—the green dwarf's poniard flashed and was buried in his throat. Down upon Rador's head swept the second blade. A flame leaped from O'Keefe's hand and the sword seemed to fling itself from its wielder's

grasp—another flash and the soldier crumpled. Rador threw himself into the shell, darted to the high seat—and straight between the pillars of the Shadow we flew!

There came a crackling, a darkness of vast wings flinging down upon us. The *corial's* flight was checked as by a giant's hand. The shell swerved sickeningly; there was an oddly metallic splintering; it quivered; shot ahead. Dizzily I picked myself up and looked behind.

The Shadow had fallen—but too late, a bare instant too late. And shrinking as we fled from it, still it seemed to strain like some fettered Afrit from Eblis, throbbing with wrath, seeking with every malign power it possessed to break its bonds and pursue. Not until long after, were we to know that it had been the dying hand of Serku, groping out of oblivion, that had cast it after us as a fowler upon an escaping bird.

"Snappy work, Rador!" It was Larry speaking. "But they cut the end off your bus all right!"

A full quarter of the hindward whorl was gone, sliced off cleanly. Rador noted it with anxious eyes.

"That is bad," he said, "but not too bad perhaps. All depends upon how closely Lugur and his men can follow us."

He raised a hand to O'Keefe in salute.

"But to you, *Larree*, I owe my life—not even the *Keth* could have been as swift to save me as was that death flame of yours—friend!"

The Irishman waved an airy hand.

"Serku"—the green dwarf drew from his girdle the blood-stained poniard—"Serku I was forced to slay. Even as he raised the Shadow the globe gave the alarm. Lugur follows with twice ten times ten of his best—" He hesitated. "Though we have escaped the Shadow it has taken toll of our swiftness. May we reach the Portal before it closes upon Lakla—but if we do not—" He paused again. "Well—I know a way—but it is not one I am gay to follow—*no!*"

He snapped open the aperture that held the ball flaming within the dark crystal; peered at it anxiously. I crept to the torn end of the *corial*. The edges were crumbling, disintegrating. They powdered in my fingers like dust. Mystified still, I crept back where Larry, sheer happiness pouring from him, was whistling softly and polishing up his automatic. His gaze fell upon Olaf's grim, sad face and softened.

"Buck up, Olaf!" he said. "We've got a good fighting chance. Once we link up with Lakla and her crowd I'm betting that we get your wife—never doubt it! The baby—" he hesitated awkwardly. The Norseman's eyes filled; he stretched a hand to the O'Keefe.

"The *Yndling*—she is of *de Dode*," he half whispered, "of the blessed dead. For her I have no fear and for her vengeance will be given me. *Ja!* But my Helma—she is of the dead-alive—like those we saw whirling like leaves in the light of the Shining Devil—and I would that she too were of *de Dode*—and at rest. I do not know how to fight the Shining Devil—no!"

His bitter despair welled up in his voice.

"Olaf," Larry's voice was gentle. "We'll come out on top—I know it. Remember one thing. All this stuff that seems so strange and—and, well, sort of supernatural, is just a lot of tricks we're not hep to as yet. Why, Olaf, suppose you took a Fijian when the war was on and set him suddenly down in London with autos rushing past, sirens blowing, Archies popping, a dozen Boche planes dropping bombs, and the searchlights shooting all over the sky—wouldn't he think he was among thirty-third degree devils in some exclusive circle of hell? Sure he would! And yet everything he saw would be natural—just as natural as all this will be once we get the answer to it. Not that we're Fijians, of course, but the principle is the same."

The Norseman considered this; nodded gravely.

"*Ja!*" he answered at last. "And at least we can fight. That is why I have turned to Thor of the battles, *Ja!* And *one* have I hope in for mine Helma—the white maiden. Since I have turned to the old gods it has been made clear to me that I shall slay Lugur and that the *Heks*, the evil witch Yolara, shall also die. But I would talk with the white maiden."

"All right," said Larry, "but just don't be afraid of what you don't understand. There's another thing"—he hesitated, nervously—"there's another thing that may startle you a bit when we meet up with Lakla—her—er—frogs!"

"Like the frog-women we saw on the wall?" asked Olaf.

"Yes," went on Larry, rapidly. "It's this way—I figure that the frogs grow rather large where she lives, and they're a bit different too. Well, Lakla's got a lot of 'em trained. Carry spears and clubs and all that junk—just like trained seals or monkeys or bears in the circus. Probably a custom of the place. Nothing queer about that, Olaf. Why people have all kinds of pets—armadillos and snakes and rabbits, kangaroos and elephants and tigers."

Remembering how the frog-woman had stuck in Larry's mind from the outset, I wondered whether all this was not more to convince himself than Olaf.

"Why, I remember a nice girl in Paris who had four pet pythons—" he went on.

But I listened no more, for now I was sure of my surmise.

THE road had begun to thrust itself through high-flung, sharply pinnacled masses and rounded outcroppings of rock on which clung patches of amber moss.

The trees had utterly vanished, and studding the moss-carpeted plains were only clumps of a willowy shrub from which hung, like grapes, clusters of white waxen blooms. The light too had changed; gone were the dancing, sparkling atoms and the silver had faded to a soft, almost ashen greyness. Ahead of us marched a rampart of coppery cliffs rising, like all these mountainous walls we had seen, into the immensities of haze. Something long drifting in my subconsciousness turned to startled realization. The speed of the shell was slackening! The aperture containing the ionizing mechanism was still open; I glanced within. The whirling ball of fire was not dimmed, but its coruscations, instead of pouring down through the cylinder, swirled and

eddied and shot back as though trying to re-enter their source. Rador nodded grimly.

"The Shadow takes its toll," he said.

We topped a rise—Larry gripped my arm.

"Look!" he cried, and pointed. Far, far behind us, so far that the road was but a glistening thread, a score of shining points came speeding.

"Lugur and his men," said Rador.

"Can't you step on her?" asked Larry.

"Step on her?" repeated the green dwarf, puzzled.

"Give her more speed; push her," explained O'Keefe.

Rador looked about him. The coppery ramparts were close, not more than three of our miles distant; in front of us the plain lifted in a long rolling swell, and up this the *corial* essayed to go—with a terrifying lessening of speed. Faintly behind us came shoutings, and we knew that Lugur drew close. Nor anywhere was there sign of Lakla nor her frog-men.

Now we were half-way to the crest; the shell barely crawled and from beneath it came a faint hissing; it quivered, and I knew that its base was no longer held above the glassy surface but rested on it.

"One last chance!" exclaimed Rador. He pressed upon the control lever and wrenched it from its socket. Instantly the sparkling ball expanded, whirling with prodigious rapidity and sending a cascade of coruscations into the cylinder. The shell rose; leaped through the air; the dark crystal split into fragments; the fiery ball dulled; died—but upon the impetus of that last thrust we reached the crest. Poised there for a moment, I caught a glimpse of the road dropping down the side of an enormous moss-covered, bowl-shaped valley whose sharply curved sides ended abruptly at the base of the towering barrier.

Then down the steep, powerless to guide or to check the shell, we plunged in a meteor rush straight for the annihilating adamantine breasts of the cliffs!

Now the quick thinking of Larry's air training came to our aid. As the rampart reared close he threw himself upon Rador; hurled him and himself against the side of the flying whorl. Under the shock the finely balanced machine swerved from its course. It struck the soft, low bank of the road, shot high in air, bounded on through the thick carpeting, whirled like a dervish and fell upon its side. Shot from it, we rolled for yards, but the moss saved broken bones or serious bruise.

"Quick!" cried the green dwarf. He seized an arm, dragged me to my feet, began running to the cliff base not a hundred feet away. Beside us raced O'Keefe and Olaf. At our left was the black road. It stopped abruptly—was cut off by a slab of polished crimson stone a hundred feet high, and as wide, set within the coppery face of the barrier. On each side of it stood pillars, cut from the living rock and immense, almost, as those which held the rainbow veil of the Dweller. Across its face weaved unnameable carvings—but I had no time for more than a glance. The green dwarf gripped my arm again.

"Quick!" he cried again. "The handmaiden has passed!"

At the right of the Portal ran a low wall of shattered rock. Over this we raced like rabbits. Hidden behind it was a narrow path. Crouching, Rador in the lead, we sped along it; three hundred, four hundred yards we raced—and the path ended in a *cul de sac!* To our ears was borne a louder shouting.

The first of the pursuing shells had swept over the lip of the great bowl, poised for a moment as we had and then began a cautious descent. Within it, scanning the slopes, I saw Lugur.

"A little closer and I'll get him!" whispered Larry viciously. He raised his pistol.

His hand was caught in a mighty grip; Rador, eyes blazing, stood beside him.

"No!" rasped the green dwarf. He heaved a shoulder against one of the boulders that formed the pocket. It rocked aside, revealing a slit.

"In!" ordered he, straining against the weight of the stone. O'Keefe slipped through, Olaf at his back, I following. With a lightning leap the dwarf was beside me, the huge rock missing him by a hairbreadth as it swung into place!

We were in Cimmerian darkness. I felt for my pocket-flash and recalled with distress that I had left it behind with my medicine kit when we fled from the gardens. But Rador seemed to need no light.

"Grip hands!" he ordered. We crept, single file, holding to each other like children, through the black. At last the green dwarf paused.

"Await me here," he whispered. "Do not move. And for your lives—be silent!"

And he was gone.

CHAPTER XXIII

Dragon Worm and Moss Death

FOR a small eternity—to me at least—we waited. Then as silent as ever the green dwarf returned. "It is well," he said, some of the strain gone from his voice. "Grip hands again, and follow."

"Wait a bit, Rador," this was Larry. "Does Lugur know this side entrance? If he does, why not let Olaf and me go back to the opening and pick them off as they come in? We could hold the lot—and in the meantime you and Goodwin could go after Lakla for help."

"Lugur knows the secret of the Portal—if he dare use it," answered the captain, with a curious indirection. "And now that they have challenged the Silent Ones I think he *will* dare. Also, he will find our tracks—and it may be that he knows this hidden way."

"Well, for God's sake!" O'Keefe's appalled bewilderment was almost ludicrous. "If *he* knows all that, and *you* knew all that, why didn't you let me click him when I had the chance?"

"*Larree,*" the green dwarf was oddly humble. "It seemed good to me, too—at first. And then I heard a command, heard it clearly, to stop you—that Lugur die not now, lest a greater vengeance fail!"

"Command? From whom?" The Irishman's voice distilled out of the blackness the very essence of bewilderment.

"I thought," Rador was whispering—"I thought it came from the Silent Ones!"

"Superstition!" groaned O'Keefe in utter exasperation. "Always superstition! What can you do against it!

"Never mind, Rador." His sense of humor came to his aid. "It's too late now, anyway. Where do we go from here, old dear?" he laughed.

"We tread the path of one I am not fain to meet," answered Rador. "But if meet we must, point the death tubes at the pale shield he bears upon his throat and send the flame into the flower of cold fire that is its centre—nor look into his eyes!"

Again Larry gasped, and I with him.

"It's getting too deep for me, Doc," he muttered dejectedly. "Can you make head or tail of it?"

"No," I answered, shortly enough, "but Rador fears something and that's his description of it."

"Sure," he replied, "only it's a code I don't understand." I could feel his grin. "All right for the flower of cold fire, Rador, and I won't look into his eyes," he went on cheerfully. "But hadn't we better be moving?"

"Come!" said the soldier; again hand in hand we went blindly on.

O'Keefe was muttering to himself.

"Flower of cold fire! Don't look into his eyes! Some joint! Damned superstition." Then he chuckled and carolled, softly:

"Oh, mama, pin a cold rose on me;
Two young frog-men are in love with me;
Shut my eyes so I can't see."

"Sh!" Rador was warning; he began whispering. "For half a *va* we go along a way of death. From its peril we pass into another against whose dangers I can guard you. But in part this is in view of the roadway and it may be that Lugur will see us. If so, we must fight as best we can. If we pass these two roads safely, then is the way to the Crimson Sea clear, nor need we fear Lugur nor any. And there is another thing—that Lugur does not know—when he opens the Portal the Silent Ones will hear and Lakla and the *Akka* will be swift to greet its opener."

"Rador," I asked, "how know *you* all this?"

"The handmaiden is my own sister's child," he answered quietly.

O'Keefe drew a long breath.

"Uncle," he remarked casually in English, "meet the man who's going to be your nephew!"

And thereafter he never addressed the green dwarf except by the avuncular title, which Rador, humorously enough, apparently conceived to be one of respectful endearment.

For me a light broke. Plain now was the reason for his foreknowledge of Lakla's appearance at the feast where Larry had so narrowly escaped Yolara's spells; plain the determining factor that had cast his lot with ours, and my confidence, despite his discourse of mysterious perils, experienced a remarkable quickening.

Speculation as to the marked differences in pigmentation and appearance of niece and uncle was dissipated by my consciousness that we were now moving in a dim half-light. We were in a fairly wide tunnel. Not far ahead the gleam filtered, pale yellow like sunlight sifting through the leaves of autumn poplars. And as we drew closer to its source I saw that it did indeed pass through a leafy screen hanging over the passage end. This Rador drew aside cautiously, beckoned us and we stepped through.

(To be concluded next month)

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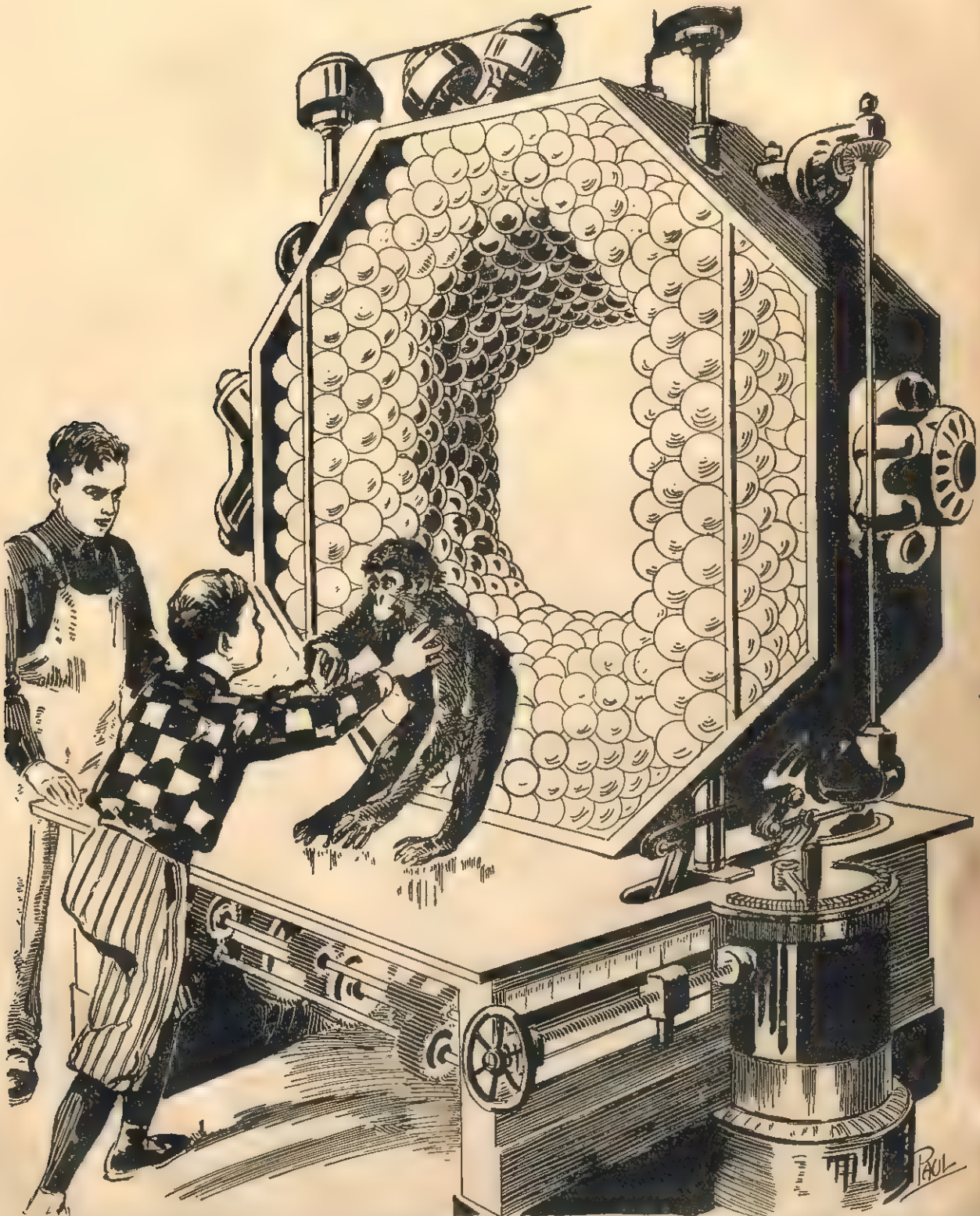
The FOUR-DIMENSIONAL ROLLER-PRESS

- By Bob Olsen -



After carefully adjusting the machine, the young inventor picked up the baboon . . . and placed it on the platform in front of the machine. He had some difficulty in forcing the animal's head between the rollers . . . but no doubt it would have been harder had not Jocko become accustomed to the appearance and noise of moving machinery.

ACTING on the suggestion of my attorney, I am writing a complete account of all I know concerning the unparalleled disappearance of William James Sidelburg.

Though his childhood and early education have an important bearing on the case, it is hardly necessary for me to remind anyone who has kept up with modern periodicals that he was the son of a well-known professor of psychology, and that his early training was carried on in accordance with certain revolutionary and original theories. The success of these experiments was attested by the fact that he entered Harvard University at the age of eleven; and, when he was only a boy of thirteen, delivered before a body of eminent mathematicians a scholarly lecture on the fourth dimension.

My acquaintance with young Sidelburg began about a year after the mathematical lecture which brought him so much newspaper fame. I had just secured my M. E. degree from a well-known engineering school, and had registered with an employment agency conducted by the college faculty. One day, early in the summer, I received from the agency a notice requesting me to apply in person to Mr. Sidelburg.

Of course I had heard of Sidelburg through the papers, and was prepared to meet a young man; but I was genuinely surprised to find that he was not only young but extremely boyish in appearance and in dress. When he spoke, the childish treble of his voice seemed strangely out of keeping with his learned vocabulary and well ordered phrases.

He explained briefly that he was planning the construction of some new psychological apparatus, and required the assistance of a man familiar with machinery,—especially one who was a skilled wood-turner and pattern-maker. He had made careful inquiries into the records of a large number of candidates, and had selected me because I had distinguished myself particularly in electricity, mathematics, and pattern-making, and also because I was one of the younger members of my class. The matter of salary, hours, and so forth were easily disposed of; and I went to work for him the following Monday.

His father owned a residence in Brookline, Massachusetts, with grounds covering several acres. In a remote corner of the estate, at some distance from the house, stood the building which young Sidelburg used as his private workshop. It was remarkably well-equipped, with an electric switchboard, giving a large range of currents, both direct and alternating and at high and low voltage. There were lathes and other machines for working in wood and metal; and everything was of the best and latest design.

Sidelburg had already prepared a set of blueprints, and he put me to work turning out some of the parts. I found that his drawings called for several thousand pieces of maple turned out in the form of perfect spheres, about six inches in diameter. At my suggestion he ordered these spheres from a firm which made a specialty of work of that sort, and this left me free to spend most of my time on the gear wheels and other metal parts of the machine.

During all this time, I had absolutely no idea of the purpose, or even the general outlines of the invention. My work had been confined to the individual parts, and all the assembling was done by Sidelburg himself. As soon as enough of the parts were ready, he began setting up the device, not inside the laboratory but out-of-doors in an open space adjoining the shop. He explained that for certain reasons it would work better in the open air, where it would be free from the restricting influence of the ceiling and the four walls.

To protect it from occasional showers, and from the more frequent prying eyes of inquisitive neighbors, he erected a flimsy awning and two screens of canvas. Though resembling a tent, it could hardly be called one, since it was completely open on the sides which faced the work-shop and the dwelling-house. It was connected electrically with the laboratory, and had four powerful arc lights for use in case he wished to work at night,—which, by the way, was very seldom.

Judging that he had good reasons for his strict observance of secrecy concerning the purpose of his invention, I discreetly forbore asking any questions pertaining to this subject. The information, when it finally came, was entirely voluntary on his part.

We had been working for about three months, and the machine had at last assumed tangible shape, when he called me from my work one day and asked me to come and inspect the device.

"I suppose you wonder what it's for," he suggested.

I admitted that the mystery of its purpose had given me some concern.

"Well, I suppose it's time I told you all about it. I'll need your help to operate it, and you may as well begin now to study the principles underlying the contrivance. I'm going to call this a four-dimensional roller-press. As the name implies, it is a device for compressing or expanding the amount of an object's fourth dimension."

Then he gave me a very scholarly and detailed account of the inception of his idea, and the theories which he had formulated and was now trying to prove. He first showed me a clipping from a magazine article giving a review of a paper by Mr. A. G. Blake, fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society of London. The theory propounded by Mr. Blake is that the density of an object may be regarded as its extension in a fourth dimension.

I have taken the liberty of quoting a few passages

THIS, without doubt, is one of the cleverest fourth dimensional stories that has ever appeared in print. If you have often wondered what the fourth dimension is, and if you have had any trouble comprehending what it is all about, you positively must read this story, because it shows, in non-technical language, just what the much-maligned fourth dimension really is. The editors of this publication believe that there is such a thing as the Fourth Dimension. We, however, have as yet not advanced sufficiently to grasp the mathematics or the mechanics of it, and we can only dimly reason that, mathematically, there must be such a thing. This story as told so plausibly by our new author, makes excellent reading for all those interested in the somewhat occult topic.

directly from the article, expressed in Mr. Blake's own words:

"Our ideas of the dimensions of a body are largely derived from the circumstances in which these dimensions may undergo variation. Thus we speak of a piece of paper as being of two dimensions because of the greater difficulty of changing its thickness compared with the difficulty of changing its length and breadth.

"In 'Flatland—a hypothetical region where only motion confined to two dimensions is possible—it is quite conceivable—nay it is a necessary assumption if we are to allow the possibility of concrete bodies in it—that the bodies should have a certain thickness in a third dimension which would be invariable in individual bodies, but not necessarily uniform among different bodies. Thus the sum total thickness of bodies in 'Flatland' would be fixed and invariable. To the inhabitants, who would be incapable of realizing thickness, this would result in the conservation of some physical attribute peculiar to bodies of two-dimensional space.

"In seeking evidence of a fourth dimension we must draw our inference from the conservation of some physical attribute peculiar to three-dimensional space. The most obvious—indeed the only one—is the conservation of mass.

"In our three-dimensional universe every body has a thickness in a fourth dimension, which is variable in different bodies but invariable in the same body, and that thickness is the body's density.

"Though we can not directly change the extent of a body in its fourth dimension, we can do so indirectly by taking advantage of the principle of the conservation of mass and compressing the body in three dimensions. This always increases its density. The two-dimensional equivalent to this is that in two-space it is impossible to alter the third dimension, yet by compressing it in two dimensions, the third will be increased while the volume will remain constant."

Though rather technical, this sounded perfectly consistent to me; but in order to be sure of my complete comprehension, young Sidelburg elucidated, amplified, and illustrated the discussion of the subject of hyper-space, somewhat as follows:

"Suppose we start with a point and move it a unit distance, say a foot, in any definite direction. This is exactly what we do when we draw a line with the point of a lead pencil. The line which results is an object of one dimension, which is length. If, however, we move our line at right angles to itself for any distance, a plane having two dimensions, length and width, is generated. For instance, if I draw out this curtain, which looks like a mere stick, or line, a flat surface or plane is formed. Now, if our plane is moved at right angles to both its dimensions, a three-dimensional solid or cube is produced. We might illustrate this by the opening of an opera hat or Japanese lantern. Let us continue the process one step further, moving our solid cube its own length at right angles to each of its three dimensions. Then we should have a four-dimentional unit, which mathematicians call a hyper-cube or tesseract. As you doubtless know, I have worked out the mathematical formulas of several other regular four-dimensional objects. To these I have given appropriate names such as polyhedrigons, sextacosiahedragons, and hecatonicosiahedragons.

"Here is another conception of a four-dimensioned object, based on the circle rather than the cube, and on rotation rather than movement at right angles. Let us go back to our one-dimensional line and rotate it about a point midway between its extremities. What is formed? Clearly, a circle, which has extension in two dimensions. Next, we rotate our circle (a plane), about one of its diameters (a line), as an axis, and we get a three-dimensional solid, it may be a sphere. Now, the question arises, what will happen if we rotate our sphere about a plane which passes through its center? This would mean rotation through a fourth dimension, and a four-dimensional hyper-sphere would result. Can you not easily imagine such a thing?"

I confessed that I could not conceive of rotating a solid object about a plane and through a fourth dimension.

"Of course," he continued, "such an idea is contrary to our common-sense notions, since we are constantly hedged about with three dimensional objects and three-dimensional concepts. If we could actually move in a fourth dimension, many strange things would be possible. We could pass out of a locked cell without touching door, window, or wall; we could take out the inside of a watermelon without disturbing the rind; a doctor could remove an appendix without cutting the patient's skin.

"These things sound like miracles; but, after all, what are miracles but phenomena which, on account of our ignorance, we cannot explain? The submarine and the airplane would have been miracles to our great grandfathers; and what are these inventions but the first feebly successful steps in man's efforts to conquer the *third* dimension? It wasn't so long ago that man was like the restricted inhabitants of Mr. Blake's imaginary 'Flatlands'—confined to the two-dimensional surface of the land or ocean. Subways, elevated railroads, mines, and skyscrapers are other examples of man's efforts to branch out in a third dimension. When our conquests of the air and of the submarine and subterranean regions are complete, the next step will be that of wresting from nature the secrets of the fourth dimension.

"Evidence of the existence of such a dimension are abundant in nature. Take, for example, the left and right symmetry of almost any natural object, such as the human body, for instance. Just as the two halves of a symmetrical two-dimensional object, such as a leaf will fit if folded over along the line of the midrib, through the third dimension, so the human body if rotated on a plane through a fourth dimension, would fit part on part.

"It is a simple matter to find out how you would appear if you turned around through the fourth dimension. Just look at your image in a mirror. Suppose you part your hair on the left side. The image man has his parted on the right side. Hold out your right hand, as if to shake hands with your image. The looking-glass man extends his left hand. Your hands are directly opposite each other, instead of being crossed in front as they would be if you shook hands with a real person.

"Now to return to Mr. Blake's theories. Suppose

I cut a circle out of paper. Since its thickness is practically zero, we may consider this a two-dimensional object; but if I pile several thousand of these disks of paper one on top of the other, a solid with a definite thickness is formed. This cylindrical rolling-pin which I have in my hand was actually made that way.

"Mr. Blake calls attention to the familiar fact that compressing an object in three dimensions increases its density. This is exactly what would happen if density were a fourth dimension. My idea is to reverse the process. By applying pressure to an object in the direction of its fourth dimension, its four-dimensional extension will be diminished, and all its other dimensions will be increased. In other words, the volume would be enlarged and the density decreased.

"Let me illustrate with an example from two-dimensional space: I have prepared a quantity of biscuit dough, and you will notice that I have cut out several objects of varying thicknesses. I can increase the thickness of any of these little squares by pressing them with my hands around the edges. If I apply pressure from above, by means of this rolling-pin, the thickness is greatly lessened, but a corresponding increase in the length and width has taken place.

"Here is a two-dimensional man, which I cut out with a form such as our grandmothers used for making ginger-bread men. If I roll him out flat, he still retains the same general form, but he has expanded in his two-dimensional world, while his third dimension has been diminished.

"If an ordinary human body were compressed in the direction of a fourth dimension his volume would increase and his density decrease. This would greatly lessen the labor of walking, would make it as easy for a person to float on fresh water as on the waters of the Great Salt Lake, and might realize the dreams of Darius Green, who, you remember, tried to fly by means of wings propelled by his own muscles.

"Of course, in order to produce pressure in a fourth dimension, it is necessary to have a four-dimensional object. This I have succeeded in accomplishing with the aid of my mathematical formulas. Just as I built up a three-dimensional cylinder by piling together a large number of circles, so I have constructed a hyper-cylinder, or four-dimensional roller by joining together a large number of spheres."

He then called my attention to certain parts of the mechanism which had interested me particularly, since they were the most distinctive features of the machine. I can think of no better way of describing one of these four-dimensional rollers than by comparing it to a cluster of toy balloons, a bunch of grapes, or a blackberry. Of course, it was more regular in shape than either of these objects, and was composed of the six-inch spheres which I have mentioned before.

Thus Sidelburg continued: "Just as a solid is bounded by surfaces, so a four-dimensional object is bounded by solids. Bear in mind that in grouping these spheres together they cannot be placed side by side, one in front of the other, or one on top of the other, as any one of these methods of joining would simply be extending the object in one of its three dimensions. They cannot be arranged next to each other, but must be put through each other or around each other. It doesn't matter much which way you look at it, but perhaps the term 'around' is easier to comprehend than 'through'."

The rollers were eight in number, and were arranged in the form of an octagon surrounding an open space about six feet across. That is, the space looked open. The youthful inventor explained that owing to a considerable, but invisible extension of each of the rollers in the fourth dimension, the space was really full, except for a very small aperture to admit the object to be compressed.

At his suggestion, I tried to thrust my hand through this space, which, as far as visible evidence was concerned, was totally vacant. Much to my astonishment, my hand encountered something palpably hard and solid, nor could I force my arm through the six foot opening.

By an ingenious arrangement of gears, operated by a powerful electric motor, the eight rollers could be made to rotate in unison. The amount of opening between them could be adjusted within a fraction of a centimeter by means of a very accurate micrometer screw turned by a wheel about the size of the steering wheel of an automobile. This wheel could either be operated by hand; or, if any especially large force were desired, could be put in gear with the electric motor by the simple expedient of throwing over a handle very much like the controller of a trolley car.

Having thus explained the theoretical and mechanical principles underlying his invention, Sidelburg proceeded to test it. I could see that he was very nervous and excited when the final moment arrived which would determine whether he had wasted an enormous amount of money and labor, or had made a revolutionary discovery.

The first object run through the press was a cylinder of steel about two feet long and three inches in diameter. It was a waste piece sawn from a longer bar which had formed one of the shafts of the machine. He placed it on the table in front of the rollers, adjusted it so that it came exactly in the center of the octagon, and directed me to throw the switch. With the jerky motion of a mechanism operated for the first time, the rollers began to rotate. As he pushed the cylinder forward it seemed to be caught by invisible claws and sucked slowly into the open space.

Sidelburg darted around to the other side, and breathlessly waited for it to emerge. A cry of joy escaped his trembling lips: "Eureka! It works!" And he seized the piece of metal and held it out for me to inspect. It had expanded to more than twice its original size, but except for the apparent decrease in density, still preserved the appearance of steel.

"Think what this will mean to the construction of aeroplanes, or any other machinery, for that matter," Sidelburg enthused. "It will be an easy matter to make steel which is lighter than aluminum."

"But will it have the same strength, volume for volume?"

"Probably not. That we can easily determine by

making the usual tests; but if my theories are correct it will be possible to make an enormous decrease in the weight with only a slight diminution in strength. Now I'm going to see what will happen if I press it to the limit."

He started the machine once more, and as soon as the rollers had taken hold on the steel rod he threw over the controller handle, thus starting the mechanism which pressed the rollers together with great force. The severe strain which this put on the machine was shown by the ripping, grinding noise which it emitted.

The result was probably anticipated by Sidelburg, but to me it was a considerable surprise to see the solid chunk of metal swell up like an enormous toy balloon, and go sailing away into space, carrying with it the canvas awning which covered our out-door machine shop.

"That illustrates another possibility," exulted the inventor. "Think of a dirigible balloon made of solid steel! No expensive silk covering, no dangerous explosive gas, just a piece of expanded metal with a propellor and rudder and elevating planes to direct it in whatever direction you desire. Now I'm going to try the effect on a living being. Jocko will have the honor of being the first living subject to go through the four-dimensional roller-press."

Jocko was the name of Sidelburg's pet monkey, a very droll creature which he kept chained to one of the poles of his out-door laboratory. I had always regarded its presence as but one of the many indications of Sidelburg's natural boyishness; and the idea that he was contemplating using it to experiment upon had never entered my mind.

After carefully adjusting the machine, the young inventor picked up the baboon (I should judge that it weighed about fifty pounds), and placed it on the platform in front of the machine. He had some difficulty in forcing the animal's head between the rollers, but I have no doubt that it would have been much harder had not Jocko become accustomed to the appearance and noise of moving machinery.

As we expected, Jocko appeared on the other side, somewhat augmented in size; though the machine had purposely been adjusted so that only a slight diminution in the fourth dimension or density would take place. Since the monkey seemed in no wise disturbed by the operation, and gave no indication that he had suffered any pain, we decided to repeat the process. The wheel of the micrometer was turned a fraction of a revolution, and this was repeated several times, until Jocko had assumed the proportions of a good sized man. When placed upon the ground, he behaved in a perfectly normal manner, except that his motions were extremely rapid, and when he moved about it was with surprisingly long leaps and bounds. Sidelburg explained that this was due to the removal of some of the inhibiting effects of gravity.

So elated was he with the manifest success of his invention, that he forgot to chain Jocko again, and the transformed animal was allowed to jump around at will and enjoy his new freedom.

Then nothing would do but that Sidelburg must try the machine on himself. In vain I pleaded with him to await a time when the experiment could be performed with other witnesses than myself. I told him I did not feel like bearing the responsibility alone; and in answer to this he hastily wrote and signed a note absolving me of all blame in case anything went wrong. This paper I have filed with the police authorities of Brookline.

Realizing at last that he was determined to experiment on his own body in spite of all my pleadings to postpone the test, I grudgingly consented to assist him. All the details of adjustment, however, I insisted that he should attend to himself. I merely waited until he had taken his position on the platform; and when he gave the word, threw in the switch.

The effect on Sidelburg was very much like that produced on the monkey the first time it went through the press,—namely a slight increase in bulk. I believe I hinted before that he was rather small in stature. His original height was about five feet and four inches, and he couldn't have weighed much more than a hundred pounds. After passing through the machine, however, his height was approximately five feet and eight inches; and one would have estimated his weight to be about a hundred and fifty pounds. This, though, was deceptive, for his weight couldn't have changed.

"How do you feel?" was my first question.

"Fine. When I was going through, I had a kind of puffy sensation, such as you have when you fill your lungs with a deep breath; but that's gone now, and I feel perfectly normal, except that it seems much easier to move." To illustrate this, he ran out on the tennis court, which was close by, propelling himself with enormous bounds, and jumped over the net. He cleared it by fully three feet! He could have easily broken the world's record for the high jump.

"I've always wanted to be a big man," he cried, "and now I can be as big as I wish. I believe I'll go through once more."

Again I begged him to wait, but with as little success as before. He gave the micrometer wheel an almost imperceptible twist, and stretched himself out on the platform. I turned on the current and the rollers began to revolve. So intent was I on watching Sidelburg as his head slowly entered the jaws of the marvelous machine, that I had not noticed the return of Jocko.

My first warning of danger was a harsh grating, gripping sound, exactly like that emitted by the machine the last time the steel rod went through it. I turned to the switch board, and was horrified to see Jocko clinging to the handle of the controller, which—doubtless in imitation of his master—he had just pulled down.

Sidelburg's shoulders and chest were just emerging from between the rollers. They were swollen to enormous proportion. From his mouth escaped a shrill cry like that of a wounded fowl; and words, thin, quivering, and very far away pierced my terror-stricken brain. "Turn off the power—for God's sa—"

I dashed to the switch-board. Jocko evidently mistook my sudden action as directed against him, for he bared his teeth and leaped upon me. It was not difficult to move him from side to side, for he was very light, but his strength was enormous. He wrapped his long arms and legs around me and

held me powerless. But desperation gave me the strength of a madman. and I finally wrenched an arm free, grasped a block of wood, and gave the ape a stunning blow on the head. He broke away from me, and with stupendous bounds leaped out of sight.

By this time, the rollers had passed over Sidelburg's torso and thighs, and were about even with his knees. His body was bloated to the size of a large balloon; and it seemed almost about to lift the machine, which was already rocking on its foundations.

Just as I pulled out the switch which stopped the motion of the rollers, a sudden gust of wind caught the swollen body, and added just enough force to wrench the press clear of the ground. Sidelburg's feet and ankles were clamped firmly between the rollers; and as he slowly rose in the air, like an enormous dirigible, he took the machine along with him.

The next day some fisherman off the coast of Newfoundland reported seeing a Zeppelin flying end up at a height of about a mile. As far as I know, that was the last that was seen of William James Sidelburg and his four-dimensional roller-press.

Some of my friends to whom I have related this story have asked me if I could reconstruct Sidelburg's invention. This I feel quite confident that I could do, with the aid of the blue-prints and formulas which he left behind; but the mere thought of making the attempt is horribly repugnant to me. I have noticed that Nature has a way of visiting dire punishment upon importunate mortals who seek to pry too deeply into her secrets.

THE END.

Discussions

In this department we shall discuss, every month, topics of interest to readers. The editors invite correspondence on all subjects directly or indirectly related to the stories appearing in this magazine. In case a special personal answer is required, a nominal fee of 25c to cover time and postage is required.

A SAN FRANCISCO RADIO ANNOUNCER SPEAKS

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I have felt the urge to tell you what I think of AMAZING STORIES for a long time, but before offering any criticism, or suggestions, I must say that AMAZING STORIES is filling a place in the needs of the scientifically minded people of this good old earth. I have found that most persons afflicted with a touch of science, have become addicts to *fact*.

Now Fact is all right in its place, a blessing that we do need, but *fact* does not concede to imagination even though imagination *will* concede to fact. This makes the victim rather cold-blooded, with a tendency to be heartless. This last state is against nature and, though man who has fought and won against nature time and time again, has to be pretty careful because some way, or somehow, nature crops up again and wins in the end; and the scientist who lacks enough imagination, and who stuffs his anatomy so full of *fact* that he hasn't room for anything else—wil soon be *passé*. The ideal attainment, therefore, is one of a complete balance of Fact and Imagination, slave to neither of the two, but master of both; and if ever a publication can be offered to a person as a means of achieving this balance—it is AMAZING STORIES.

In offering my criticism, I wish to say mildly that the story "The Green Splotches" really deserves no place in this magazine. This story treats on something that is impossible: namely; "Plant men that can talk." Where do they get their lungs? Why does not the story tell us how, or why the Plant Men picked the certain spot they did in order to land? Funny that they would remain ignorant of the fact that other people existed, and in much better "specimens." We learned no secret from their methods of communication nor of controlling their great ship. And, as a whole, the story left us with much of a feeling of disappointment.

On the other hand, such stories as "Off On a Comet," "A Columbus of Space" and even "The Island of Dr. Moreau" are all worthy of the highest praise. (I am speaking of my own personal feelings) these stories were all very entertaining, and each one seemed unsurpassable until the next one came out and took the honors away from it. But the best story of all is "The Land Time Forgot" and its sequel "The People Time Forgot." In this story, one gets a little of the *human* angle which is so desirable; human feelings, human sufferings. of a real physical nature which we can all understand, rather than the "mental tortures of some great brain which we sympathize with, but cannot understand." In bringing the two girls Lys and Ajor into the plot, Mr. Burroughs lends a *something* to the story that makes it worth reading. We like to read of such things as a land still infested with dinosaurs, petrodactyls, the brontosaurus and those things *because they are real*. They *have* lived and we have *facts* enough to satisfy the most critical of scientists.

However, Mr. Burroughs has created a situation that I am sure our readers are not going to like if it turns out the way it looks. He has ended the second installment with the Americans leaving behind good old Billings. Now that will never do. If the story ends like that, then for heaven's sake write a sequel to it that will bring Billings out of it—with the girl. Even I could get him out of it, so there is no question but that Mr. Burroughs can.

EDWARD J. LUDES,
Chief Announcer of Radio KYA,
San Francisco, Calif.

[The letter which we print carries out the gist of what we have said in reference to another correspondent—that imagination plays a great part in the development of natural science. What our correspondent says about "The Green Splotches" is in the same line of thought with what some others have written us. An old saying is that it is impossible to please everybody, but our magazine shows us that it is equally impossible to displease everybody, because many of our readers have been greatly delighted with the very story he condemns. Mr. Stribling is an author of high reputation. You need not have worried about "good old Billings" in Mr. Burroughs' story. He comes out all right in the end, as you probably have seen.—EDITOR.]

A VOICE FROM FAR OFF INDIA

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I have been regularly reading the AMAZING STORIES magazine since April last and I have found that the contents really are amazing. To read your stories one must have a great deal of imagination and I do not boast when I say that I have got that. Here in far off India I hesitated ere I wrote to you this letter because I thought that you in New York would take no heed of me. But as I continually read in your magazine, that you invite all your readers to write to you, I venture to write and tell you that I really like this magazine. There are no stories that I have not read up to now, and all of them are really excellent. Your serials, like "Station X," "A Trip to the Centre of the Earth," "A Columbus of Space," "The Second Deluge," "The Purchase of the North Pole," "The Man From the Atom," "Beyond the Pole," "Off On a Comet," "The Island of Dr. Moreau," etc., etc., are simply superb, while the short stories are really grand.

DADY A. CHANDY,
Bombay, India.

[We feel that the most complimentary reply we can give to this flattering letter from India is to print it in full. We would like to say that we are doing our best, but while we have our best in mind, we realize that there is always room for improvement, and we want to substitute better for best, in a sense, so as to feel that we are going to improve our AMAZING STORIES issue after issue, as the months go on. Such letters as this, which we feel almost pass our deserts, are very acceptable.—EDITOR.]

TELEPATHY AND THOUGHT MACHINES IN ACTUAL LIFE

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I have always been intensely interested in that class of literature which you so aptly term "scientifiction," and since AMAZING STORIES first appeared I have been an avid and enthusiastic reader of its engrossing contents.

Lately I have noticed that you referred to certain items in the news that apparently substantiate two remarkable tales which have appeared in this magazine. The stories were "The Island of Dr. Moreau," by H. G. Wells, and "The Red Dust," by Murray Leinster. But they are not the only examples of scientifiction which have proved true to an exceptional degree. Within the last few weeks I have come across no less than three newspaper articles based on subjects which, as fiction, had already appeared in AMAZING STORIES. One (which recently was printed in *The Evening World*) was headed "Insects Imperil Life of Mankind," and it told as fact what H. G. Wells related so vividly in "The Empire of the Ants." Then again, the Sunday *World* of January 9th contained an interesting account of the startling experiments by means of which an Italian scientist (Prof. Cazzamalli of the University of Milan) discovered that under certain conditions the human brain emits radiations which may be received by a specially constructed complex radio set.

What might happen when this device is perfected has been brilliantly portrayed by Samuel M. Sargent, Jr., in "The Telepathic Pick-Up." The third article which has come to my attention is perhaps the most extraordinary of all. It appeared in *The World* on January 16th, and related how the disappearance of Dr. Knute Houck, of Washington, may have been due to a mental disturbance caused by his absorption in a mysterious "Thought Machine," which "is supposed to disclose the innermost thoughts of any one who has mastered its use." Since this machine is a reality, having been patented by its inventor, a Polish mathematician, the readers of AMAZING STORIES can only hope that it does not affect mankind as does its fictitious counterpart in Ammianus Marcellinus's realistic tale, "The Thought Machine."

AARON L. GLASSER,
New York, N. Y.

[The editors are very glad to see that our readers back up the editorial policy of AMAZING STORIES, namely, that what is scientifiction today will very likely be fact tomorrow. We were fully aware of all the references which our correspondent was so good as to cite, including the so-called Cazzamalli experiments on the human brain, supposed to emit radiations. The editor of this publication is also the editor of RADIO NEWS and SCIENCE AND INVENTION, and has been trying for a number of months to get a line on Professor Cazzamalli, but there seems to be no such individual, and no one in Milan seems to know anything about him. We have, therefore, come to the conclusion that Professor Cazzamalli is very likely a myth.—EDITOR.]

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STUDENTS' MYOPIA

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Ever since AMAZING STORIES appeared on the magazine stands I have not missed a single issue, and, on the whole, I find it the most interesting and instructive magazine published.

Now, I have seen in several discussions the complaint that some of the stories were too fanciful to be swallowed. No story can be too wild to be *possibly* true even. Sometimes science students get so close to their subject that they cannot see it. They become too much absorbed in their work, and forget your admonition that "he who goes no farther than fact rarely gets as far as fact."

Most criticisms are doubtless intended to be constructive, but most show an absurdly infantile prejudice against certain types of stories. Now, I have either found something interesting or something instructive in every story. They fulfill all my demands of literature.

Literature in general has two distinct functions: To amuse temporarily, and to serve as the record of human thought. The most important part of the last mentioned function is the stimulation of creative thought.

I consider it unworthy of AMAZING STORIES to appeal to the passing whims of a distraught reading public seeking only a new and strange diversion. Rather should this new publication aim at the higher, the nobler and more useful ideal of encouraging and recording the best thought in its field. You will find that your steady readers are eager, serious people, for otherwise they could not, and would not, read AMAZING STORIES with comprehension and sympathy.

So any of your stories that enlarges our mental vision and heightens our perception of natural truths has merited its publication. Few indeed have failed to do what they promised. Critics may howl and anathematize to their heart's content. I find nothing unworthy in AMAZING STORIES, and I have read everything from the first.

Of course, we all have our preferences and prejudices, but we must not lose sight of the fact that tastes differ. What is nonsense to the astronomer may be wonderful to the biologist. All cannot be wholly satisfied, but I think you have struck as happy a medium as anyone could reasonably expect.

Long live AMAZING STORIES! May they delight us during many more months.

JACK LEA HARPER,
Austin, Texas.

[The writer of this letter, to a great extent, expresses our ideas in the editing of AMAZING STORIES. We will never let it become a sensational magazine. It will always be one which appeals to the seriously disposed readers, to those who want to get some good science out of their reading and to find this feature combined with the interest attaching to fiction. It is not too much to say that a person who never reads fiction and who may be almost morbidly self-conscious in that regard, is not on the road to become a good scientist. Imagination is a great aid to scientific progress and investigation and it is interesting to see in our correspondence, how many of our readers take an enlightened view of the field we are trying to cover, making fiction illustrate scientific fact and lead to the development of a proper conception of "the world we live in."—EDITOR.]

"GREEN SPLOTCHES" AND THE NOBEL PRIZE

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Two days ago I saw the AMAZING STORIES magazine on sale at the newsstands, and, as I enjoy reading stories of that kind, I bought it. Now that I have finished reading it, I must say that I enjoyed it so much that I would like to know whether you can supply me with the issues prior to the March edition. I am enclosing a stamped envelope for your reply, as I would appreciate your kindness in securing me the previous copies.

You have a form to fill out in the magazine, asking whether the reader enjoyed reading the stories. As this is my first initiation into the AMAZING STORIES group, I wish to say that I really liked every story in the book. There was not one single story that seemed dull to me. When I started a story I could hardly wait till I could leave my work and continue it. They were wonderful, and I hope that you will publish them at least twice a month.

And now I would like to ask a question. In the story of the "Green Splotches", was that adventure really experienced by the men as set forth? Can it be possible that men from some other planet have visited our earth? I can hardly believe it, but as the Nobel Prize was awarded to them it must have been a true account. Or was it just a prize for the best story of that sort? I do not understand. I would like to know more about it.

I wish you every success for the magazine, and I am sure all of your readers wish the same. I hope that there will be enough copies of the prior issues to go around, for I suppose there are many people that have been asking for them. Awaiting your reply, I am,

MISS *I. K.*,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

["Green Splotches" is fiction from end to end, including the assertion of the awarding of the Nobel Prize to one of the characters. The skill of the author is shown in the effect the story had upon some of our readers. We certainly appreciate your good wishes and commendations.—EDITOR.]

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"GREEN SPLOTCHES" COMMENDED

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Sir: I think you were correct in your estimate of "The Green Splotches" as being the best story in the March issue. I think it is an excellent scientific conception, and its literary execution is thoroughly workmanlike.

I have one criticism on the story. The writer's conception of a plant organism having the intelligence of human beings or a much higher one, provided a marvelous opportunity for a bit of sensation, which I think the author neglected. An intelligent plant would not necessarily have a form resembling that of the human; in fact the probabilities are that the form would be vastly different. Putting these beings into human form is a bit of anthropomorphism that is so characteristic of scientifiction. We can't break away from it; we merely saw at our bonds and sever a thread at a time; we still put a human form on everything.

Building up from the conception of a plant form, with senses necessary to keeping in touch with the environment, with manual ability and locomotive ability; and with the probability that the sensory end-organs would be all close together (the face), we could build up a very fantastic and still very reasonable being. Plant locomotion would not at all be by means of legs; most probably by cilia or flagella, which could be adapted to use on dry land; or a circular shape adapted to rolling would be within bounds of verisimilitude, for it is used by plants to distribute seeds. Instead of hands, tendrils or tentacle-like fingers would be much more probable. Why a mouth and larynx, when the critters do not eat? Nor talk?

And so forth. Then, for one of these forms to appear in the skin of the Peruvian crook, would be reasonable; for he would have reason to want to conceal his odd shape

Still, I enjoyed the story, and hope you can get more like it.

MILES J. BREUER, M. D.
Lincoln, Neb.

[Dr. Breuer is well-known to our readers from his most interesting story entitled, "New Stomachs For Old," and we place special store upon his criticisms. It is interesting also to notice, how so qualified a person almost accepts the stories we publish as true and discusses them from the standpoint of probability.—EDITOR.]

THE SEXES IN PLANTS

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I have just finished the March issue of AMAZING STORIES and I must say that each issue becomes better than its predecessor. Of the several stories printed in the last one I consider "The Green Splotches" one of the best scientifiction stories I have ever read. I have read practically all of Verne's longer novels and most of his shorter tales. In fact, I read his "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea" when I was only nine years old. Since then I have read hundreds of the various types of scientifiction.

But to come back to "The Green Splotches." It was a most convincing tale. At times I actually found myself thinking of it as true. There was only one discrepancy in the whole story, at least it was the only one I could find after my second read-

DeLong's communication he refers to ting only one of each species. Also ex was probably unknown among the First because they were plants. I be- was unintentional upon the part of t is a known fact that plant life has d division.

e, among the trees we find this sexual e date fruit tree is one. The male d female (staminate) fruit producing born on different trees and so we e two kinds together in order that ill result.

g the flowers there is the same division. the agency by which the pollen is male to female (literally) in order to emale.

W. A. YOUNG,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

sting criticism illustrates how serious- are taken by our readers, and shows been unexpectedly successful in car- idea of mingling good science with so as to amuse, but far more to ex- and thereby at once amuse and what uct our readers

we enjoyed "Green Splotches" very lly as it read not at all like a second- ion of South America, but seemed to e ways vividly before us.—EDITOR.]

NTUROUS CORRESPONDENT

NG STORIES:

a letter of appreciation for your two olications, AMAZING STORIES and *Sci- ention.* My brother is a subscriber and I to the former, so we both get

ost a "beginner" as a reader of RIES, but it is the best ever. Do you Editor, as strange as it may seem, e a few people around here that are and horrified at *such stories* as are magazine. Can you imagine it? But et you in on another little secret of will explain matters somewhat.

Senate and House are in session now, yesterday's "news" where there has l-evolution bill introduced in the

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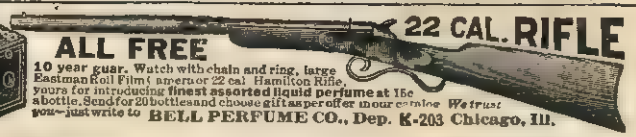

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House, to prevent the teaching of any form or shape of evolution in any and all schools of the state. The chief difficulty of introducing this resolve in the House, was to find a representative to be a "dad" to it. I guess that we have a few sensible people in Maine after all. This bill will give lots of us a good laugh anyhow.

Anyway, I don't think that we have much chance of becoming another Tennessee. If I did think so, I would try and find myself a "lost world."

I am only a young farmer, 28 years old, as you will see by my card, and I haven't the education to grasp some of the terms and expressions of science, but I do my *darndest*. I was helped along a whole lot by travel and experience as well as by reading every scientific magazine I can get hold of. I answered the "call" in 1917 when I was 18 years old, and I stayed in the U. S. service for more than 6 years. Most of the time in the U. S. Marines. I have more than 50,000 miles of sea and land travel to my credit. I touched many foreign shores, and was stationed for a time in most all of the islands of the tropics. So I have had a chance of broadening out some.

Many of your stories do not seem so strange to me, nor absolutely impossible either. I spent five months on a military mapping and surveying outfit in the interior of the Republic of Panama, and I have seen many strange things during my tropical travels.

This letter maybe will be of no particular interest to you, but as you requested on my card, more information about your readers, I thought I would explain as near as I could, about one reader (me) and his opinions.

With apologies for all typographical errors,

Yours for a better and bigger AMAZING STORIES.

CLAIR P. BRADSTREET,
Wytopitlock, Maine.

[Evolution at present is a theory which is supported by many known facts, but which utterly fails to explain other facts equally well known. It should be taught as a theory and not as a cold-blooded statement of mathematically demonstrated proof. It originated, as far as we know, with the Epicurean school of philosophers over two thousand years ago. Lamarck modified it materially, and after his days, Darwin modified it still more and it is constantly being changed in its presentations. Had Darwinism been taught as an absolute fact and proved condition of things 50 years ago, it would not have matched with the present views of evolutionists.—EDITOR.)

GOOD CRITICISM

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I think on the whole the letter of J. P. Cague quite fills the case. I do not think it is the picture on the outside of the magazine which lends it the cheap appearance so much as the paper. If AMAZING STORIES was printed on paper such as that on which SCIENCE AND INVENTION is printed the effect would be much better. My friends have, from the general appearance of the magazine, remonstrated with me for reading it.

I also agree with the rest of Mr. Cague's comments except that I do *not* like Murray Leinster. I think that A. Hyatt Verrill, Merlin Moore, Taylor and the authors of "The Man In the Room" might be included among the very readable authors, who write for your magazine and the detective stories that you issue are *the* thing.

Your comment about "Gulliver's Travels" was all right and I agree so far as you go BUT that story could not possibly come true except on some other planet and I must remind you that your motto is "Extravagant Fiction Today . . . Cold Fact Tomorrow" and so this does not come within the range of your magazine. Also, and I am sure that the readers of AMAZING STORIES will agree with me. I do not like this magazine for its stories of "man-eating trees" and such junk. "Gulliver's Travels" was a fairy story. To those who like such books I recommend the Oz books and such.

The letter of E. H. Hardy on the whole meets with my approval except those comments on Murray Leinster. There are many stories of H. Rider Haggard and Jules Verne which I have been unable to obtain. Such ones as are out of print would almost assuredly not have been read by many of the AMAZING STORIES fans. These, I am sure would meet with widespread attention. "Wierd Stories" runs a reprint department of stories such as these so why shouldn't AMAZING STORIES? Long stories, novel length, are, to me, much more enjoyable than short stories, so, if you approve this, why not run more than one serial?

I admire your choice of stories as a rule and am only writing this with the hope of giving you more good ideas. I especially enjoyed "The First Men On the Moon" and "The Land That Time Forgot" (which, by the way, I had read before).

M. J. WRIGGINS,
Philadelphia, Pa.

[We do not agree with our correspondent in some of his remarks. If he regards "Gulliver's Travels" as merely a fairy story, he is missing a great deal. The somber minded dean of St. Patrick's, Jonathan Swift, wrote "Gulliver's Travels" as a bitter sarcasm on the way things were done by humanity in this strange world of ours and the fairy story part of it is merely a vehicle for carrying stern and often unpleasant facts home to the stolid mind of everyday humanity.—EDITOR.]

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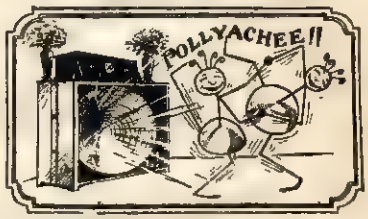

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ACTION AND REACTION IN A VACUUM

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

My boy has just brought me a copy of your AMAZING STORIES, with the question as to why I have taught him one thing and you—whose magazines he reads avidly and with sincere belief—state, as a fact, the distinct opposite.

In your editorial in that magazine you state that a man may move himself about in a vacuum by violently kicking his feet, and you compare that to the action of the Goddard rocket.

Upon reflection, I am sure you will desire to correct that statement in both aspects: (1) the man cannot shift his center of gravity under the circumstances stated—though he might by removing his coat or a shoe and hurling it from him; (2) the action of kicking his feet, which are part of a closed system, has no relation to the action of gases in the Goddard rocket.

You owe quite a duty to young America, Mr. Gernsback, and I am sure you desire accuracy above all things.

GEORGE W. GRAHAM,
Washington, D. C.

[We want our readers to send us their views on this problem. Action and reaction are equal and opposite in the sense that momentum, mass velocity is the measure of the action and reaction. When a body reacts from another body, each has energy imparted to it and energy is measured by ½ the mass velocity. Therefore, when a man kicks, the action and reaction of the body and legs would be equal and opposite. But the energies will not be equal and opposite, because the lighter legs and feet will move with much greater velocity than the body. What do our readers make out of this? —EDITOR.]

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912.

Of AMAZING STORIES, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1927.

State of New York
County of New York, ss.

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Hugo Gernsback, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor of the AMAZING STORIES and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, managing editor, editor, and business managers are:

Publisher, Experimenter Publishing Co., Inc., 230 Fifth Avenue.

Editor, Hugo Gernsback, 230 Fifth Avenue.

Managing Editor, Hugo Gernsback, 230 Fifth Avenue.

Business Manager, Robert W. DeMott, 230 Fifth Avenue.

2. That the owner is:

Experimenter Publishing Co., Inc., whose stockholders consist of: Hugo Gernsback, Sidney Gernsback, Robert W. DeMott, Dr. T. O'Conor Sloane, H. W. Secor, I. S. Manheimer, all of 230 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Mrs. Catherine Major, 545 West 158th St., New York City. M. M. Finucan and L. F. McClure, both of 720 Cass Street, Chicago, Ill.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: NONE.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustees is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustee, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

HUGO GERNSBACK.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of March, 1927.

(My commission expires March 30, 1929.)

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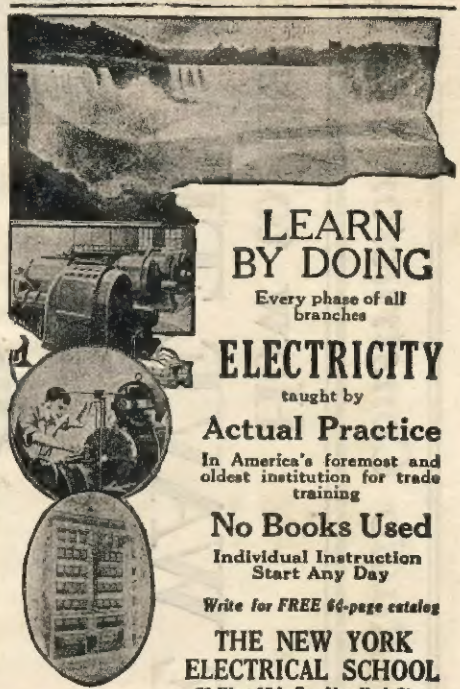

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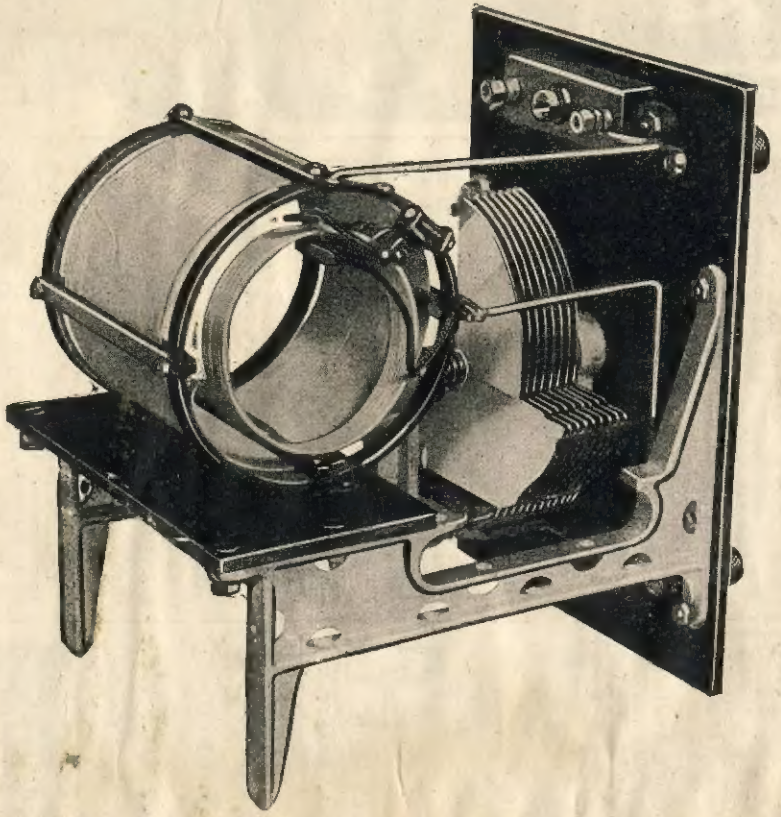

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